

THE MUSIC REVIEW

May 1958

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THE MUSIC REVIEW

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Covent Garden Performances of *Messiah* in 1749, 1752 and 1753

The Evidence of a Word-Book Considered

BY

WATKINS SHAW

IN spite of all that we know, our information about performances of *Messiah* during Handel's life-time is still not as complete as we could wish. We have, of course, the dates and places of most performances, and the names of very many singers; but still there is much else we should like to discover, especially what versions of certain movements were performed, and by whom, on particular occasions. So far as performances at Dublin in 1742 are concerned, much valuable information has been derived from the word-book of one of the two earliest performances there in that year. The British Museum copy of this book contains, in pencil, the names of certain solo singers, and an account of these details was given by J. C. Culwick in 1891.¹ A considerable number of word-books exist relating to Covent Garden and other performances between 1744 and 1759 (the year of Handel's death), but these are tantalisingly vague, for the singers' names are not printed in them, and contemporary newspapers do not assist much. Nor, from the nature of the case, can word-books help, save in the most limited way, in determining which version of a movement was sung, where more than one version exists. We know more about the Foundling Hospital performances than most others, thanks to the preservation of the Minute Books of that foundation;² but these formed a special series, quite distinct from those given as part of Handel's customary London seasons.

One word-book relating to his seasonal performances in Covent Garden theatre is, however, of unusual interest. It is now the property of the University of California, by whose courtesy and helpfulness the author has been able to examine a photo-copy. This primarily concerned a performance at Covent Garden in March, 1749. It was also used, apparently by its first owner, at three subsequent performances—two in March, 1752, and one in April, 1753, the dates of which he wrote at the end of the book. The same writer has annotated the book with the names of singers, giving dates to six of his

¹ *Handel's Messiah: Discovery of the original word-book . . . With some Notes.* Dublin, 1891.

² Extracts are given in W. G. Cusins: *Handel's Messiah* (London, 1874); J. R. Tobin: "Messiah Restored—An Apologia", *Musical Times*, April, 1950; and O. E. Deutsch: *Handel, A Documentary Biography* (London, 1955).

entries. It has long been understood that the composer introduced important changes into his work during the period 1749-50. By studying the MS. notes in this copy of the word-book we can obtain a more complete picture than was formerly possible, and perhaps tentatively reconstruct a few other details of Handel's Covent Garden performances of *Messiah* in 1749, 1752 and 1753. (The user of our word-book evidently did not attend in 1750 when Guadagni, the male alto, sang; and there was no performance in 1751.)

It is not surprising that the singers' names are entered rather unsystematically in the word-book. They are simply the jottings of an interested concert-goer, made for his private use, and are not a formal register of performers. It must be borne in mind that some may well be retrospective jottings—that is to say, when (for example) in 1752 the writer entered the name of some singer, he may then have been prompted to write the name of the 1749 singer if that had not already been entered; and if he was hesitant in his recollection, that would account for the signs of erasure which may still be detected here and there beneath certain names.

But to a careful inspection these jottings yield clear hints. In six instances, as we have seen, dates are explicitly shown; it is obvious, too, that the names "Frazi" and "Galli" appear in two slightly different styles of writing—the work of the same hand, no doubt, but written at another time and with a different quill. These will be labelled *A* and *B* in Table I, setting out the MS. annotations.

It will be seen that wherever Galli and "Frazi" have been crossed out, it is writing in style *A* which has been struck through. It will further be noticed that where a date is given for Frasi (1752: "Then shall the eyes of the blind", and "If God be for us") it is connected with an entry in style *B*. We therefore assume that style *A* refers to 1749 and style *B* to 1752. Hence, we can be sure—independently of what we know from other sources—that although Galli's name is the first to occur for "But who may abide" and "Thou art gone up", she sang these in 1752, *not* 1749. (In fact, the alto versions of these two movements were first sung by Guadagni in 1750.) The name of Beard is not found in style *A*; and, as Lowe is known to have given up singing for Handel in 1752, that is consistent with our allocation of style *A* to 1749, style *B* to 1752. With regard to the bass arias, it will be noticed that only one name occurs, that of Wass, which is written in style *B*. Mr. Winton Dean informs me—and his statement can be taken as authoritative—that Wass did not begin to sing for Handel until 1752, and that in 1749 Reinhold was still employed. (Here again, our suggestion concerning the dates of the two styles of handwriting is consonant with the known facts.) We shall therefore take it that Reinhold's name should be "understood" in this word-book in relation to the 1749 performance. There is no need to speculate very far on the reason why it is not entered. It is simply this: Lowe, Galli and Frasi were singers new to *Messiah* (Lowe not entirely so), whereas Reinhold had been associated with all the earlier London performances. It is not surprising, therefore, that the owner of this word-book took his name for granted, and did not write it down; interest was confined to the new singers. We suggest, then, that in

TABLE I

Comfort ye	"Lowe". (Probably written retrospectively; it bears every appearance of having been written at the same time as Beard's name.) "Beard" "1753". (The name was perhaps written in 1752, the date being added when Beard sang again the next year.)
Thus saith the Lord	"Wasse".
But who may abide (printed as a recitative)	"Galli" (style B); "Guadagni 1753".
Behold, a virgin	"Galli" (style A).
For behold, darkness	"Wasse".
There were shepherds	"Frazi" (style B).
Rejoice greatly (Word-book prints " <i>Da Capo</i> ")	"Frazi" (style A).
Then shall the eyes	"Galli" (style A), <i>crossed out</i> ; "Frazi 1752" (style B).
He shall feed his flock	"Galli" (style A), <i>crossed out</i> ; "Frazi" (style B); (against the verse "Come unto him") "Frazi" (style A).
He was despised	"Galli" (style A).
All they that see him	"Lowe", <i>crossed out</i> ; "Beard 1752".
Thy rebuke	"Frazi" (style A), <i>crossed out</i> ; "Beard".
Behold and see	No names; presumably as above.
He was cut off	"Frazi" (style B).
But thou didst not leave	No names; presumably as above.
Unto which of the angels	"Lowe", <i>crossed out</i> ; "Beard".
Thou art gone up (printed as a recitative)	"Galli" (style B); "Guadagni 1753".
How beautiful (aria)	(An erasure); "Boy" (style B, perhaps written retrospectively in 1752), <i>crossed out</i> ; "Frazi" (style B).
Why do the nations	"Wasse".
He that dwelleth	"Lowe", <i>crossed out</i> ; "Beard".
I know that my Redeemer	"Frazi" (style A).
Behold, I tell you	"Wasse".
Then shall be brought	"Galli" (style A).
O death, where is thy sting?	"Galli" (style A). "Lowe", <i>crossed out</i> ; "Beard".
If God be for us	(An erasure); "Boy" (style B, perhaps written retrospectively in 1752), <i>crossed out</i> ; "Frazi 1752" (style B); "Guadagni 1753".

1749 Reinhold sang all the numbers later sung by Wasse. (Discussion is meanwhile reserved on the question of what versions of "But who may abide" and "Thou art gone up on high" were performed in 1749.) All this information can now be tabulated.

TABLE II

(Notes: (1) (A) and (B) refer to the styles of handwriting already discussed. (2) (x) indicates a name struck through when a further name was written. (3) + indicates that the movement may safely be presumed to have been sung by the singer of that which immediately precedes. (4) An arrow indicates that, by not writing a name, the original owner of the word-book probably meant that the singer already named for a previous year sang again. (5) A name in italics, bracketed, is entered as a suggestion by the present author. Reasons have partly been given already concerning Reinhold; those concerning the boy and Guadagni will presently be advanced.)

	1749	1752	1753
Comfort ye	Lowe	(Beard)	Beard 1753
Ev'ry valley	+	+	+
Thus saith the Lord	(Reinhold)	Wass	→
But who may abide (version?)	(Reinhold)	—	—
But who may abide (re-composed alto version)	—	Galli (B)	(Guadagni)
Behold, a virgin	Galli (A)	→	(Guadagni)
O thou that tellest	+	+	+
For behold, darkness	(Reinhold)	Wass	→
The people that walked	+	+	+
There were shepherds	(Boy)	Fraasi (B)	→
And lo, the Angel	+	+	+
And the Angel said }			
And suddenly }			
Rejoice greatly (common-time version)	Fraasi (A)	→	→
Then shall the eyes	Galli (A) (x)	Fraasi 1752 (B)	(Guadagni)
He shall feed his flock	Galli (A)	Fraasi (B)	(Guadagni)
Come unto him	Fraasi (A)	+	+
He was despised	Galli (A)	→	(Guadagni)
All they that see him	Lowe (x)	Beard 1752	→
Thy rebuke	Fraasi (A)	Beard 1752	→
Behold and see	+	+	+
He was cut off	(Boy)	Fraasi (B)	→
But thou didst not leave	+	+	+
Unto which of the Angels	Lowe (x)	Beard	→
Thou art gone up (version?)	(Reinhold)	—	—
Thou art gone up (re-composed alto version)	—	Galli (B)	Guadagni 1753
How beautiful are the feet (aria followed by chorus, "Their sound is gone out")	Boy (x)	Fraasi (B)	(Guadagni)
Why do the nations	(Reinhold)	Wass	→
He that dwelleth in heaven	Lowe (x)	Beard	→
Thou shalt break them	+	+	+
I know that my Redeemer	Fraasi (A)	→	→
Behold, I tell you	(Reinhold)	Wass	
The trumpet shall sound	+	+	+
Then shall be brought to pass	Galli (A)	→	(Guadagni)
O death, where is thy sting	Galli (A)	→	(Guadagni)
(duet)	Lowe (x)	Beard	→
If God be for us	Boy (x)	Fraasi 1752 (B)	Guadagni 1753

We may now discuss the successive points of interest presented by the evidence thus marshalled.

The most arresting feature of all is that the California word-book makes it quite clear that in 1749 "He shall feed his flock/Come unto him" was divided between alto and soprano. It is well known that this was originally composed for soprano throughout; it is also a fact, though not nearly so well known, that Handel had it sung on some occasions entirely by an alto, in the key of F major. It has always been something of a problem to find out when he hit on the idea of dividing the aria between the two voices. Certainly there has hitherto been no evidence to justify our placing this as early as 1749. Our word-book, questionable though its testimony may be here and there on other matters, speaks firmly on this point; nor is there at present other evidence to cast doubt upon it. We may therefore take it that the alto-soprano version of this aria, the form most familiar now, was in use in 1749, a full ten years before the composer's death. We must also note, however, that it would appear that he resumed the all-soprano form in 1752.

There are a few gaps in the list of names for 1749. Those concerning soprano numbers are of small importance, and it may readily be suggested that they were sung by a boy. It was quite common for Handel to divide the soprano work between two singers in such a way; moreover, from a series of names which he wrote in red pencil in his own conducting score of *Messiah*,³ a series which must refer to either 1749 or (more probably) 1750, we know that he used a boy for those very items against which there is no name in our word-book for the year 1749.

As we have already explained, the bass movements later sung by Wass were sung by Reinhold in 1749. But we must consider the special cases of "But who may abide" and "Thou art gone up on high". In the first state of composition, these movements were set as bass arias. Later on, the first of them was recomposed twice—once as a recitative, sung at Dublin in 1742, once as an aria for alto (specifically, "for Guadagni") containing the *prestissimo* section at the words "for he is like a refiner's fire".⁴ The second of them was re-set more than once, and, in addition to (i) the original bass aria of 124 bars, there are also versions as follows: (ii) for mezzo-soprano in D minor of 116 bars, (iii) for alto (again "for Guadagni") also in D minor of 116 bars, the voice-part beginning on a minim, and (iv) a transposition of (iii) to G minor for soprano. To these we must also add (v) a postulated recitative version, on the evidence of the present word-book and of the word-book for Dublin, 1742. Our question is, which alternative version of each movement was sung in 1749? We may at once rule out those versions specifically written "for Guadagni", and their respective transpositions for soprano. We must also, I think, rule out the two original forms; for, in that connexion, it is highly significant that in the Tenbury conducting score in which Handel himself, not once but many times,

³ St. Michael's College, Tenbury Wells, Worcs. MSS. 346-7. See the present author's paper, "A Handelian Team of Singers: 1749 or 1750?" in *The Monthly Musical Record*, May, 1958.

⁴ That is to say, the version now generally, and unwarrantably, sung one octave lower by a bass. Handel later authorized its transposition to A minor for soprano.

has written the name of Reinhold over the bass movements, *the name of Reinhold is not found over the original versions of these two movements at all*. This throws us back, in the case of "But who may abide", on the recitative version as used at Dublin in 1742, and printed as an Appendix by Samuel Arnold in his edition of 1787-8. In the case of "Thou art gone up on high", our choice lies between the mezzo-soprano setting in D minor or the unknown recitative, presumably for bass. In the present author's opinion, we must choose the latter. The whole appearance of the California word-book suggests that, had Galli or Frasi sung this number in aria form, the appropriate name would have been entered. On the other hand, the hypothesis of Reinhold *cum* recitative fulfils every requirement of the word-book as we can now hope to understand it. This is indeed interesting, because a recitative setting of these words is perhaps the one fragment of *Messiah* text authorized by Handel which has not come down to us. As *recitativo secco*, it was probably on a scrap of paper only; and when, after Guadagni's version took the field in 1750, it ceased to be used, neither Handel nor Smith took the trouble to preserve it.

It will be seen from Table II that the present author assumes that Frasi sang the common-time version of "Rejoice greatly" in 1749, even though this is not a *Da Capo* aria as printed in our word-book. On this point, the testimony of the printed form in the word-book is not strong. Every known word-book of performances under Handel's direction at Covent Garden prints *Da Capo*; yet it is indisputable that the common-time, non-*Da Capo* version was sung at a considerable number (if not, indeed, all) of these. That sufficiently disposes of any objection based on the printed word-book. More positively conclusive is the simple fact that Handel's own writing in the Tenbury conducting score indicates that Frasi sang it at least three times before his blindness, to say nothing of Beard (tenor) and a boy singer. One such entry of Frasi's name is in red pencil, part of the series of names which refers either to 1749 or 1750. If this does refer to 1749, our point is established. If, on the other hand, it refers to 1750 (as the present writer believes), the point is by no means invalidated. A singer such as Frasi had to be taught her part painstakingly, and it is therefore not likely that she would sing a different version in 1750 from that in 1749. Moreover, the extra leaves containing the re-composed non-*Da Capo* version had already been inserted and bound into the Tenbury conducting score before the 1750 performance, whereas the arias specially composed and sung for the first time at the 1750 performance did not then form part of that score. This alone would create a strong presumption that the non-*Da Capo* version of "Rejoice greatly" was sung in 1749.

Reviewing the information assembled for the performances of 1752, we observe that although Guadagni was introduced as male alto soloist in 1750, Galli is now re-instated as the only alto. And, as her name occurs against "But who may abide" and "Thou art gone up", we are probably safe in saying that she now added the "Guadagni" aria versions of these movements to her repertory, though theoretically she might have sung the mezzo-soprano version of "Thou art gone up". Evidently Handel, almost from the first, did not intend to restrict these versions to a male alto, even though he had expressly

composed them for such a singer. We notice also that in 1752 he divided the four recitatives beginning "Thy rebuke" between soprano and tenor, not two sopranos; and Frasi was given the second pair, not the first. (She would thus learn some new music, but was not asked to learn anything in a version different from what she had already sung.)

The year 1753 is rather puzzling. The annotator of our word-book seems to have taken particular trouble to write Guadagni's name with the date against "Thou art gone up" and "If God be for us",⁵ but mentions him nowhere else. Can this really mean that he sang no other numbers, and that possibly Galli supplied the remainder of the alto work? Surely not, especially in the case of "But who may abide". Further, a lead-pencil entry made by Handel in his conducting score shows that at some time Guadagni sang "How beautiful" in a version transposed to C minor. If he sang this on his first appearance in 1750, why not again in 1753? But if he did not sing it in 1750, 1753 is the only year that Handel's mark can refer to. His name is similarly found on "Behold, a virgin", so that on like grounds we must put this down for 1753. Also, we know from Burney (*History*, IV, 495) that at some time he sang the arias associated in the first place with Mrs. Cibber, which must include "He shall feed his flock"⁶ and "He was despised". To sum up: we can hardly assume other than that he sang his own special setting of "But who may abide" in 1753, and the present writer inclines to the view that, though Signora Galli certainly took some of the alto work in 1750, Guadagni was the sole alto singer in 1753. This would, surely, be reasonable: with greater experience, and having proved his acceptability, he could now safely be entrusted with all the work allotted to the alto voice.

* * * * *

By way of appendix, some further notes may be added arising from the subject of the postulated *recitativo secco* setting of "Thou art gone up on high".

The first concerns the form in which the printed word-books were issued. It is a remarkable fact that every known word-book concerning Handel's Covent Garden performances from 1749 onwards, and even those after his death up to the year 1767, print this movement as "Recitative" as in the Dublin word-book of 1742. There are grounds, as we have seen, for believing that Reinhold may have sung this as a recitative in 1749. But in 1750 Guadagni sang the aria version composed for him, and this was subsequently performed by women altos and also sopranos. Yet the printer of the word-books seems to have continued to work from old copy, and left it unrevised as a recitative. This is noteworthy in itself. It is also relevant to the printing of *Da Capo* after the words of "Rejoice greatly", because it shows that there was not necessarily a careful revision of the text of the word-book in connexion with any particular performance. If Frasi sang the non-*Da Capo* form in 1749

⁵ Concerning "If God be for us", it may be noted that the Tenbury score is actually marked by Handel to be transposed to C minor "for Guadagni".

⁶ In his *Commemoration of Handel*, 1785, p. 84, Burney says, "Guadagni, after Mrs. Cibber, established its reputation".

when the word-book prints *Da Capo*, then we may say that the printer was probably working from an old word-book (of, let us say, 1743 or 1745) which was prepared when a *Da Capo* indication may have been correct. And it goes on being so printed for the rest of Handel's life.⁷

Our second note concerns Handel's use in general of alternative *recitativo secco* settings of certain *aria* movements. On a couple of spare staves in the Tenbury score (MS. 347) he has caused to have copied such a setting of the words "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel", using the tenor clef. This alternative has been preserved for us because there was a convenient place for it in the existing MS. Another recitative setting, this time of the words of the second part of "Why do the nations" (namely, "The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed") was scribbled by Handel himself on the back of an odd bit of music paper which already contained the ending of a composition for solo voice to Italian words. It happens that this piece of paper has survived, and is now bound up with the end of Tenbury MS. 347.⁸ Another point at which Handel *may* have authorized an alternative recitative setting is "O death, where is thy sting". Such a setting was known at Salisbury not later than 1761.⁹

Thus we see that the use of recitative settings of "But who may abide" and "Thou art gone up on high" is conformable to Handel's practice elsewhere. But no trace of either is to be found in any MS. which he used personally; and "Thou art gone up on high" has vanished altogether. It is probable that he had them on separate bits of loose paper; and that after the "Guadagni" versions of these movements came into use from 1750 onwards he took no further trouble over the scraps of paper bearing these recitatives. In short, these settings were makeshifts which had served their purpose. It was perhaps otherwise with the second section of "Why do the nations", and one may proceed to suggest that this has survived by design, not mere accident.

It is certain that Handel did not write his complete *aria* setting of "Why do the nations" with any intention that there should be a *Da Capo*. He intended the second section to lead directly to the chorus "Let us break their bonds". The sense of dramatic movement when passing straight to the chorus is greatly increased by the recitative setting of the second section of the bass solo. It almost seems that what may have arisen first as no more than a means of lightening the role of the bass soloist was realized to be an artistic improvement;

⁷ It is a pity that word-books for Covent Garden in 1743 and the King's Theatre in 1745 have not survived to enable us to test this hypothesis. The surviving word-book specially printed for the Academy of Antient Musick performance in February 1744 gives no *Da Capo* for "Rejoice greatly"—but neither does it for "He was despised" or "The trumpet shall sound"; it prints both "But who may abide" and "Thou art gone up" as "Songs". But the form of this word-book is not relevant to our problem. We are concerned with the sequence of word-books beginning in 1749 and issued for the public subscription series of Handel's oratorios, printed and sold by J. Watts and B. Dod.

⁸ The case of this setting is only very slightly different from the others under discussion in that the supporting chords, though in *secco* style, are actually *stromentato*, like the conclusion of "Thus saith the Lord".

⁹ See the present author's paper, "John Matthews's Manuscript of *Messiah*" in *Music & Letters*, April, 1938.

and this may be one reason why the odd leaf on which this recitative was written came to be preserved whilst the others are lost.¹⁰

We have mentioned the idea of lightening the role of the bass soloist. Here we enter what is obviously a realm of mere conjecture. But is it entirely fanciful to attach significance to the observation that alternatives to "But who may abide", "Thou art gone up" and "Why do the nations" all concern big movements originally composed for solo bass? Thomas Reinhold, Handel's bass soloist, was about 60 years old in 1749-50, and may, perhaps, have suffered some loss of powers. If so—and it must again be stressed that this is no more than supposition—it might supply a reason for the revival in the year 1749 of the "Dublin" recitative versions of "But who may abide" and "Thou art gone up on high"; and perhaps also suggest the occasion for the composition of the shortened second section of "Why do the nations". We could go even further and perceive a possible reason why, when Handel introduced Guadagni into *Messiah* in 1750, he did not simply allot existing alto work to the new man, but also recomposed for him two of the arias which had at first been intended for a bass.

SUMMARIZED CONCLUSIONS

1. The version of "He shall feed his flock/Come unto him" which is divided between alto and soprano can be traced at least as far back as 1749.
2. In 1749 we conjecture that two solo sopranos were employed, one of them probably a boy; in 1752, however, it seems clear that Frasi alone was engaged.
3. It appears likely that in 1749 both "But who may abide" and "Thou art gone up on high" were sung in the form of bass recitatives by Reinhold.
4. The common-time version of "Rejoice greatly" goes back to 1749 at least.
5. Guadagni, who was introduced into *Messiah* in 1750, did not sing in 1752, but reappeared in 1753.
6. In 1752 all the alto work, probably including the "Guadagni" versions of "But who may abide" and "Thou art gone up on high", was taken by Galli. Meanwhile, published word-books continued to print these numbers as recitatives.
7. In 1749 Handel probably divided the "Passion" recitatives between two sopranos. In 1752 he certainly divided them between tenor and soprano.
8. (Mere conjecture.) Perhaps in 1749-50 Reinhold sang the version of "Why do the nations" in which the second section is in recitative form.

¹⁰ The word-books of Watts and Dod never indicate a recitative setting of this part of "Why do the nations"; but that is of practically no significance. We do know that the recitative had some continued currency. For example, in a copy of a word-book printed for the administrator of J. Watts (i.e., after 1767) which is now in the National Library of Scotland, the word "recitative" is entered in MS. against this part of "Why do the nations". Again, in a word-book issued at Worcester in 1776 (in my own possession) the words "The kings of the earth . . ." are actually separately printed as a recitative. It was also current at Salisbury before 1761, as shown by Matthews' MS., referred to in footnote 9 above; and it is, of course, included in the score and parts bequeathed by Handel to the Foundling Hospital.

On playing Don Curzio

BY

ARTHUR HUTCHINGS

IF my voice had ever deserved public description, the programme would have called it bass-baritone. This the producer knew when he asked me to play Don Curzio in *The Marriage of Figaro*. My refusals were unemphatic. In late middle age I was gratified at the opportunity to fulfil an old desire to sing in opera, yet I had sincere scruples about the high notes. I was assured that nobody would be distressed if I secured the Gs in the sextet by *falsetto* or by sheer force of breath; I was under no obligation to put my lungs to still greater strain for the As in the last ensemble of the opera because my notes would be doubled by Basilio's; I might mouth them in dumb show or dodge to the lower octave. "We want you because none of our tenors is loud enough for the principals in the sextet, and none is old enough for Curzio, whereas you will look just like a judge drawn by Hogarth or Rowlandson. Don't bother about the notes. You'll get them in tune and we shall hear your words. After all, it's only a minor part".

Conductor and producer were both ardent—some would say fastidious—Mozartians, yet they thus easily gave Curzio to a man incapable even of parodying the quality of a tenor voice. To how many lovers of Mozart's operas would their action have been shocking? How many would have noticed the liberty while attending our performance? None of the newspaper reporters commented upon it, though they were censorious about other faults; one of them said that if I aspired to an operatic career I should try to conquer my stammering, though I was to be congratulated upon managing invariably to recover control *on* the beat.

Each time I donned the wig and bands I became more aware that Don Curzio's part was not a minor one, but the remnant of a big one which might have been composed if Da Ponte had not blundered. This almost redundant Curzio was such a character as neither he nor Mozart would have created in a libretto invented wholly by themselves—perhaps drawn from a story given to them by word of mouth. Like Barbarina, Curzio comes oddly into the opera merely because Da Ponte did his work with Beaumarchais' play open before his eyes. I think it a pity that he did not close the copy as soon as he had memorized the main points of the plot. Now it is important for me to assure the reader that I reached this opinion only from direct experience of Mozart's opera. I had never looked at Beaumarchais until last week, long after sharing a widespread feeling that Mozart's last act is anticlimactic, and several weeks after playing the part of Don Curzio each of four times with increasing dissatisfaction.

As I sat in the dressing room plastering my face with a suitably liverish complexion, I heard the series of brilliant ensembles which constitute the finale

of the most wonderful second act in all opera. Every singer's contribution to those ensembles and to the work as a whole was clear; every one had an essential part, major or minor. The two of us yet to be heard—though Barbarina had been on stage with the chorus—did not belong to this opera that was just approaching its mid-point, and we were to have no really important contribution to make in the new sort of opera that is represented by the last two acts. Our parts were like odd pieces left over after the imperial censor or a clumsy producer had made heavy cuts. My friend Barbarina, who agreed with me, told me that Beaumarchais had given us both quite interesting parts, not major ones but essential ones. I admitted my lack of direct acquaintance with the play, and proved it by asking her if Beaumarchais' Curzio¹ had any qualities that explained his tenor voice in the opera. No; she thought that the judge was a tenor merely because the Count, Figaro, and Bartolo were not. If three low voices would have made a quintet too thick, why did not Basilio complete the sextet? Why introduce another character to do so little, and that almost entirely for musical purposes? Because Da Ponte saw the judge's part lying beneath his eyes in the open book of the comedy.

It is a platitude of criticism that in *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* the vocal registers prescribed are part of Mozart's subtle way of delineating character, and that they cannot be changed without great dramatic as well as musical loss. When we hear Giovanni's warm baritone we know why the ladies fall for him, and as soon as we hear the virtuous Ottavio's tenor, despite *bravura* passages, we know why he has been called a "somewhat insipid lover". Basilio's tenor was also deliberately chosen, but Curzio's was a musical expedient, prompted by none of the dramatic imagination which made the "real" Figaro a baritone and the caricature Basilio a tenor. So as I counted my beats to yell "*Al fiero tormento di questo momento!*" above my natural compass, my work was to me but a vocal exercise. Torment for the Count perhaps; but why should the discovery of Figaro's parents cause the judge any pangs but those of suppressed mirth?

My reflections made me hunt among my newspaper cuttings for an article which appeared in *The Sunday Times* for 26th June, 1939. I wish Ernest Newman had added it to a revised *Opera Nights* or a book of collected essays, but as far as I know he has not pursued its subject publicly since before the war. The title is "Mozart and Da Ponte. The Libretto of *Don Giovanni*", but there are some paragraphs about *Figaro*. In the first two acts, says Newman, Da Ponte and Mozart achieved something "unapproached in opera until then . . . and still unapproached". Mozart's part in this feat was "the shaping and modelling of his music to the form and substance of life in quick motion". I had remembered the gist of that phrase for nearly twenty years, but I had not remembered Newman's diagnosis of the weaknesses in the last acts:—

"With the third act Da Ponte's difficulties begin. He carries on, with his accustomed dexterity, the main business of the intrigue—the recognition of Figaro as the son of Bartolo and Marcellina, together with the Count's dawning suspicion that the lively

¹ Curzio is chiefly Brid'oisin of Beaumarchais' play, but he is a composite of two lawyers.

brains of Figaro and Susanna are likely to prove too much for him. But the humorous 'trial' scene in Beaumarchais' third act was both too long for operatic purposes and perhaps not wholly suited for music, though one feels that Mozart, had he been given the chance to work in his own way upon the figures of the judge, the advocates, and all the serio-comic procedure of the court, might well have woven it all into a musical ensemble as superb as that of the second act. . . . Da Ponte had now to let go the guiding hand of Beaumarchais and rely upon his own invention. The result was that something of the swift and logical movement of the drama went out of it, and Mozart was forced into conventionalities that were not propitious for his peculiar genius. . . . The threads so cleverly woven by Beaumarchais were broken for purely operatic purposes (e.g. by "*Dove sono*"). . . . In order to fill up his third act, Da Ponte had to draw upon the first half of Beaumarchais' fourth. This left him with insufficient matter for his own fourth. Not quite knowing what to do until he came to the relatively short final scene in the garden, he loaded Mozart with a quantity of padding".

Having re-read this article and also made my belated acquaintance with Beaumarchais' comedy, I understand my queer feeling that the part of Don Curzio is "left over"; and I notice that Da Ponte's excision of some small but important scenes prevents Barbarina's part from forming a genuine thread in the opera. With all humility, however, I wonder if Newman is right in supposing that we should have had the perfect *Figaro*, the last two acts maintaining the speed and quality of the first two, if Da Ponte and Mozart had stuck to the order of scenes in Beaumarchais. (He says so later in the article.)

Since I am merely putting on paper the reflections of a man who never composed a libretto nor set his poor music to any dramatic entertainment more highly organized than a revue or ballad opera, the reader will pardon my impudence in setting forth my own diagnosis of the loss in dramatic tension at the end of *Figaro*, and my boldly suggesting an arrangement of Beaumarchais' story which I think would have produced a consistent *Figaro* if Mozart had accepted it. How heartily I agree with Newman that he should have been forced to work upon the trial scene, though we have no evidence that he was given the chance to decline this labour!

I once took the top form of a grammar school to see *Figaro*. After the wedding scene at the end of the third act they began putting on their scarves and coats and preparing to go, and I have seen the same preparations for departure made by adults who attend *Figaro* for the first time. Like the rest of us, these boys were delighted to find that they could enjoy another act of Mozart, but did not their action show the most obvious weakness in the work? Enjoyable though much of that last act is, containing the loveliest single piece, "*Deh vieni*", and some of the best ensemble work leading to the extremely moving "*Perdono!*" passage, the final jubilations ("*Corriam tutti*") seem a little perfunctory. They occupy enough time and bring in every singer and orchestral player; but the finale of the second act makes a memorable preceding impact, and the finale of the third act—the wedding procession, fandango and homage choruses—is in the most splendid room of the Castle. So brilliant have been these former finales in their effects upon our eyes and ears that a swift "Let's forgive, forget, and all be merry", within a minute of the Count's extreme anger and the Countess' extreme sadness, with the stage lit only by lanterns and whatever indulgence is allowed for the moon, cannot sufficiently

balance the impression received at former falls of curtain. We should not find a quiet or nocturnal ending strange, but *Figaro* attempts to finish otherwise in a manner which proves somewhat anticlimactic to any but the most indulgent critics.

Suppose, however, that Da Ponte, knowing that he could not use all the spoken play, had got it by heart and worked with the book shut. It might have occurred to him that, since the whole action turns upon schemes to advance or retard Figaro's nuptials, a triumphant arrival at the wedding could have made the best ending precisely because this would be a good *musical* ending. The climax of the spoken play is very properly a long speech by Figaro upon men and things, chiefly the social order before the revolution—the sort of sermon which occurs towards the end of Shaw's social comedies. Ratiocination belongs to verbal expression, and we may be glad that Da Ponte and Mozart did not try to outwit the censor. Figaro's speech can be summarized: "See how these useless creatures spend their time! (The sub-title of *Le Mariage de Figaro* is *La folle journée*.) See how they treat their social inferiors, especially their serving maids! But are they inferiors? Who possess brains and character, the masters, or the servants who outwit their masters?" Da Ponte and Mozart had the sense to omit far more than this speech, the chief matter for official censorship and the chief cause of the play's notoriety. (There were seven German translations in print within two years of its publication in France.) They made no more reference to the *droit du seigneur* than was necessary, and we may well wish that composers and librettists today shared their perception concerning verbal satire and other materials that do not invite music. They could surely not have followed the order of the play successfully, for they could not have secured a fourth-act finale suitable for an opera. They achieved the brilliant conclusions of their first two acts precisely by departures from Beaumarchais, though Newman is right in telling us that departure from Beaumarchais served them ill just after the second act. Let us briefly examine the conditions in which the curtain falls.

"*Non più andrai*" still brings an echo of its first loud acclaim. Mozart rarely finishes with a solo, but this first act ends with a solo merely in the sense that Figaro alone sings. The effect is of a more elaborate finale, swelling into a march. Cherubino is taunted: "No more, you amorous butterfly, you little Narcissus, you midget Adonis, shall you run around upsetting the ladies. You are going to taste the army—not the fandango but the march, not languorous music but a concert of trumpets, drums and guns. And if he doesn't get killed first, some day Master Cherubino will return from victory in a blaze of military glory". The trumpet, which others would have used at the opening of the aria, Mozart withholds till "*alla gloria militar*" suggests the mock magnificence of the march. Though I do not like modern attempts to farce Mozart's operas with visual humour—something which has spread, as one would expect, from Germany—surely producers are justified in letting the curtain fall as Susanna and Cherubino march off behind Figaro using anything handy—the measuring rod or a broom—to represent a musket on the shoulder. Now

the only thing in the play to suggest an *aria militare* and pantomimic march is a short speech murmured aside to Cherubino immediately after the Count tells him that he must join the regiment at once. The words occur neither at the end of the act nor in its last scene, which is a battle of wits between Figaro and Basilio from which Mozart could hardly have drawn any action or fall-of-curtain applause. It belongs, like the very end of the play, to the world of spoken comedy, and there it secures the right last laugh.

The finale of the second act is also a translation to the world of opera of a climax that does *not* finish the second act of the spoken drama. Beaumarchais' second act is not quite a sustained *crescendo* of stage-filling and rising tension. It concludes with two scenes in which only the Countess and Susanna are present. Plainly we cannot diagnose the opera by compiling a list of agreements and disagreements with the play. The ideal *Figaro* would neither have followed the order of the play methodically nor wilfully departed from it to include lyrical set pieces, but it would have continued the good work of using the play as a mine of ideas for a new conception. The wedding seems to be the one situation that would make a grand enough finish to the whole opera, with or without the fireworks promised by the Count; but what should then finish the third act? Certainly nothing too grand or too long to foil the *imbroglio* finale of the second act or the wedding finale of the new fourth act.

If Da Ponte had made Mozart accept the trial scene, he could still have begun the third act with such lyrical numbers as the assignation duet between Susanna and the Count and the letter duet between Susanna and the Countess. As the drama would not yet be in full motion, these items would no more have halted it than does "*Porgi amor*" at the beginning of the second act. They would advance the story at their own pace and, as now, reveal their participants' characters. Following them, the trial would surely have proceeded by concerted movements as does the main business of the second act. What more natural than that the last situation of the trial, taking a new turn at the discovery of Figaro's parentage, should have resolved itself in the present sextet? Having already played his significant part as the presiding judge, Curzio could then have sensibly allied himself with the Count in his determination not to let the case rest with the transports of the happy families. The coda would have needed no extension at the end of the sextet, for surely Mozart would have delayed the fall of curtain until the amusing little passage which, in its new position, would have offset the threats of the Count and Curzio. Those two having stormed out, the rest would continue for a few seconds up to their pert unaccompanied quartet of two phrases: "*E schiatti signor Conte al gusto mio!*", well rendered by Dent: "And if my lord is furious, so much the better!"

Here, I humbly suggest, is the order which the last two acts might have followed, making *Figaro* dramatically and musically more consistent, if Mozart had not been pleased with what he was offered for the present last two acts, and if Da Ponte had been a dramatist of original genius rather than a versifier of intelligence as well as a music lover with unusual perception of a composer's needs and with considerable skill in adapting other men's plays and libretti.

- Act 3. Assignation duet between Count and Susanna.
 Susanna's aside to Figaro.
 Count's recitative and aria, "*Vedrò, mentr'io sospiro*".
 Letter-dictation, duet between Countess and Susanna.
 Trial scene, ending with disclosure of Figaro's parents.
 Sextet, leading without break of music to angry withdrawal of Count and Curzio, brief exchange of plans between the remaining four characters, the act ending at "*E schiatti signor Conte etc.*"
- Act 4. Susanna's aria, "*Deh vieni non tardar*", preceded by her recitative "*Giunse alfin il momento*", at the end of which Figaro retires in anger, supposing her words to refer to the Count.
 Figaro's recitative, "*Tutto è disposto*" and his aria, "*Aprite un po' quegl'occhi*".
 The mistaken-identity flirtations.
 Denouement, beginning with the Count's demand for lights.
 The Countess' pardoning of her husband, during which the others withdraw to fetch the bridal veils and begin the wedding procession.
 The present act 3 finale leading to the "*Corriam tutti*" finale of the present fourth act.

Imagining a perfect *Figaro*, one must remember that in the Mozartian conception of opera there was room for lyricism along with far swifter dramatic movement than is found in other opera or in so-called music-drama. One must also recognize that swift movement as well as the sweetness drawn from "held" situations was normally expressed through the items called "set pieces" in books which suggest that they are categorically incompatible with musical drama. I was glad that Newman's definition of "set piece" implied the reverse, acknowledging that Mozart's union of music and drama in items which allowed music to grow and finish by its own processes, fulfilling the form proposed by its ideas, was quite as successful as that achieved in the best so-called music-drama. There may be dead matter—musically or dramatically—despite the continuity of sound in music-drama, just as there may be the dramatically dead matter which Newman calls a "set piece" in Mozartian drama; but the pace of the best Mozartian drama is unique.

"Apart from the Countess' '*Porgi amor*' at the very outset, there is not a single set piece in the whole of this (second) act—not one piece, that is to say, in which the action stands still in order to allow a singer to take the stage and hold it immobilised for a purely lyrical outpouring. Cherubino's song '*Voi che sapete*' is no exception and does not negate my statement . . . for it grows out of the action, merges into the action again, does not tie up the psychological threads, but keeps them moving. From Susanna's chattering little monologue onwards to the end of the act there is not a single break in the action; and the music is an affair either of quick give-and-take between one character and another, or of a combination of them all at nodal points in the intrigue. The problem of giving opera something of the continuous texture of real life had never before been so triumphantly solved."

There might have been precedent if Monteverdi or Purcell had dealt with social comedy or "real life" in opera, and they too would have used closed numbers—songs upon *ostinato* basses, pieces of the aria type, dance-forms,

occasionally polyphonic pieces. Newman's definition of "set piece", to which I shall adhere for the rest of this essay, recognizes that drama may advance during an aria or duet or chorus that is *not* a set piece just as validly as during a recitative or the complex which eighteenth-century composers, such as Handel, called a *scena*. Undoubtedly the point-to-point, "Recitative loading the gun and Aria firing it" movement of the old *opera seria* is often vividly accelerated by a *scena* at points of climax, and this technique has been admired by champions of music-drama who seem to think that continuous and complex music must always be more "dramatic" than music conceived in a series of closed designs; but they rarely say what they mean by "dramatic"—a point which I shall discuss later. For the moment it is enough to point out that in *Don Giovanni* and in the second act of *Figaro* Mozart could advance his plot at a pace "which has remained unapproached" with very little departure from the routine of successive closed numbers. That is why, in my imaginary perfect *Figaro*, I retain the arias and duets in the present third act (except "*Dove sono*", much as I love it) but banish the arias from the beginning of the present fourth act because they are indeed set pieces.

"*Dove sono*" arrests the drama to tell us no more about the Countess than did "*Porgi amor*". True, it finishes in fine *bravura* style as the Countess dares to hope that her fidelity and devotion will be rewarded, but surely Da Ponte and Mozart attached no dramatic importance to her gleam of optimism; it merely justified giving an *aria d'agilità* to a singer whose only other aria had a modest vocal compass. Evidently Nancy Storace was a great enough artist as well as singer to need no such concession.² Yet it would be mistaken to suppose that a perfect *Figaro* would include no display arias. Mozart's genius could use them without letting them become set pieces, not only in *Die Entführung*, which has been called a singers' opera, but in *Don Giovanni*, Mozart's finest musical drama, and of course in *Così fan tutte*, his most perfect opera and finest orchestral score. (The "masonic" scoring in *The Magic Flute* and the *Requiem* is excluded from general comparisons.) Genius culpably lapsed in Mozart as in other great artists, but convention never yet forced the lapse into dramatic sterility. That remark is especially true of the older kind of opera with separate "numbers", for I disagree with those who speak even of the Metastasian libretto as undramatic; its drama merely unfolds by regular ticks of recitative-cum-aria, with the motion of a toothed wheel, instead of slowly but unrestingly in the style of music-drama; but music-drama demands a greater indulgence of our credulity than does Mozartian social comedy and postulates conventions as extensive as those of Metastasian opera. If, therefore, convention forced genius into dramatic paralysis, we should look for examples chiefly in the works of Gluck or Wagner.

For the deplorable series of set pieces at the opening of the fourth act of *Figaro* we should not blame convention but Mozart's unawareness of, or compliance with, Da Ponte's padding before he reached the dramatic business of

² Recent writing perpetuates the mistake that Nancy Storace was Mozart's first Countess. She was not. Susanna is the *prima donna* in *Figaro* though, as Dent observes, it is pardonable to make the mistake since the *prima donna* rarely plays a soubrette part.

this act. It will be noticed that I retain one of the arias in question, and that one not the most attractive musically. I refer to Figaro's "*Aprite un po'*", and I hope my reasons will be clear when I explain my rejection of the others. No doubt I offended by wishing to omit "*Dove sono*" from my ideal *Figaro* on the grounds that it is a set piece. I may give greater offence by wishing to omit the first item in the fourth act, Barbarina's song about the pin. I admit that it cannot be called a set piece, because Barbarina's searching brings Figaro's inquiry; but why use Barbarina in the opera at all unless her part can be something more than this odd bobbing in and out to justify what others are doing? Da Ponte could have given Figaro the same part in the last act by other means than the pin incident. And what poor music this is! One or two sages are reminded of the G minor Symphony every time a phrase crinkles up a semitone from the dominant. Are they reminded of November the Eleventh every time a trumpet leaps a fifth? What significance is there in these little *stimuli* but the knowledge that when our brains are not at work we behave like Pavlov's dogs? If this little item had been first presented to us as an oddment by Gluck, C. P. E. Bach, or many another contemporary of Mozart's whose melodic invention was second-rate, nobody would have suspected a greater authorship. Still, if Barbarina had been allowed Beaumarchais' scene with Cherubino in the third act, if she had been given a better part in the opera as a whole, I should have retained this item.

Next comes Marcellina's aria. The words do not falsify the character, but the music is not good enough to justify so long a suspension of action on a darkened stage. There follows the single greatest blot on the score—Basilio's "*In quegli anni*". Up to this point Mozart has done marvels with Basilio by purely musical means. He has made him a scheming rogue, a revolting deceiver, sycophant, backbiter and lecher-at-second-hand. If we had to name the highest level of purely musical humour we should mention either his malicious delight in the discoveries of act I—"Cosi fan tutte le belle" or "*Ah meglio ancora*"—or the barbed mutual courtesies in the duet between Susanna and Marcellina, including the epithets "*Sibilla decrepita, dottoressa arrogante, etc.*" This fourth-act aria takes humour from this level to that of the German operas, if not to a lower level still, and at one stroke Basilio is turned from a subtle snake into an amiable clown. Even Rossini, willing to enjoy clowning, would not degrade the Basilio he inherited from his beloved Mozart; he merely made him almost too villainous to be believed. Mozart's Basilio can just be believed until this nonsense about the ass' skin. The part that seems most incongruous is the finishing with a moral—that he who wears an ass' skin can meet all reverses of fortune. How could Mozart waste his clever shaping of Basilio by letting him now become a mere ass? It is a sad comment upon our taste that producers include this aria while omitting some of those which occur before and after it. If it is allowed in a production at all, by all means let it be a pantomime. Why object to the disgusting habit of stuffing Mozart's operas with visual humour, as favoured between the wars in Germany and brought here through Glyndebourne—for whose producers I do not wish to stint praise—if Mozart has already turned social comedy into farce?

Figaro's aria is not a set piece if it follows straight after his supposed disillusionment—after his questioning of Barbarina, or whatever other means is used to arouse his suspicions, and his hearing of the recitative by Susanna preceding her "*Deh vieni*". I had already written "*after 'Deh vieni'*" but thank a friend for persuading me of my gross error. Figaro could not possibly suppose that the music of "*Deh vieni*" expressed an illicit passion for the Count. In my scheme he would have to go away as soon as the recitative enraged him, and refuse to hear any more. As a concert piece, his aria about the plight of husbands and the folly of trusting men might seem musically inferior to others in the opera; yet it is this far the counterpart of "*Deh vieni*"—that it is also a means of completing our knowledge of the character who sings it. We have not yet seen Figaro deeply hurt. "*Se vuol ballare*" expresses sarcastic anger, but his betrothed revealed what made him smoulder and his deeper feeling is for her. Now, supposing that he like others must lose their fondest dream, he takes his fate stoically. The shrugging of the shoulders is not a gesture of rapturous lyricism and so this aria pays a musical price for its concession to dramatic truth; but that dramatic truth prevents it from being a set piece and so it should stay.

Though to defend "*Deh vieni*" is to waste words, they are not perhaps wasted on showing its parallel with Figaro's aria. It completes the picture of Susanna. She has been partner in each duet and participant in each ensemble, so we know her by her reactions to and upon all others; we see her strong-willed, fond of a jest, and brave in the face of danger; but until she sings alone in this last act we have not known the depth of her womanly tenderness. The radiant confidence of her love is wonderfully offset by that of the Countess, whose "*Dove sono*" might be retained precisely to show the contrast, its nervous tenderness being without radiance or confidence. This contrast, as well as Mozart's best music, was lost when "*Deh vieni*" was scrapped for the 1789 revival in Vienna to please Adriana del Bene, the Susanna who was supplied with the perfunctorily brilliant "*Al desio*". (It can be inspected in the appendix to the Novello vocal score, and is reckoned among the concert arias least worth performing, K.577.)

My ruminations have gone far beyond those of our green room, but for that I must thank my preserving of Newman's article. I still do not want to finish without discussing one sentence in that article which I have purposely withheld . . . "Mozart was well on his way to creating musical drama". Newman did not make the mistake of writing "music-drama", and he knows better than I do that Monteverdi, Purcell, Scarlatti and Handel each created musical drama of his own kind before Mozart, even if some histories of music are blind to the fact; indeed musical drama is older than opera, for we find it, for instance, in Adam de la Halle's *Gieus de Robin et Marion* of c. 1285, or in the Easter and other liturgical plays of the Middle Ages. The Florentine *camerata* set out to revive drama, but it needed Monteverdi's genius, when men spoke of "*il tedio del recitativo*", to make musical drama in which musical expression did more than words could do, be they never so powerfully coloured and abetted by music; for music is not necessarily the greater because what it expresses can

also be expressed or mentioned in words such as "victory", "bereavement", "love". Moreover Monteverdi himself, being no whit the less a musical dramatist in the process, was already beginning before *Poppea* to treat his plots in the way which Metastasio raised to a fine art. Monteverdi and his disciples, Cavalli and Cesti, with their dance-forms and song-forms, their occasional polyphonic-style chorus or madrigal-ensemble, their new-style accompanied madrigals or duets, their items on *ostinato* basses and so on, had learnt to unfold a drama by stages so that music's expression could be the more powerful in being allowed not merely to grow, but also to finish, by its own processes, including the recapitulatory and cadential ones. For a splendid commentary on Mozart's ability to accommodate these particularly dangerous processes to changes of dramatic situation I refer readers to Schönberg's comments on *Figaro* in "Brahms the Progressive". (See *Style and Idea*.)

Obviously Newman quite rightly does not concede this method of closed numbers, stemming from the Italian tradition, to be any less dramatic than others; but it does clearly isolate its set pieces, whereas the dramatically dead wood of music-drama is embedded in the live tree. One can pull Mozart's dramatic tares without snapping the plant, and judging by Malipiero's cavalier treatment of *Poppea* in the only vocal score available with a realized accompaniment, he presumes to apply the weeding process—I think without justification—even to Monteverdi. Gluck's reforms were not like those of reformed thieves or rakes, changes of bad to good, but re-formings of libretti on lines already begun by Zeno and Metastasio, who wished to omit comic elements from *opera seria* along with any material they thought irrelevant and farced. It must be pointed out that Gluck's methods of simplifying a libretto, and later Wagner's preparation of the text of a music-drama, made the sustaining of musical drama a far easier task for the composer than Mozart's. Gluck and Wagner chose stories that would move consistently but slowly, perhaps accelerating at climactic moments. They jettisoned the stage business with which they surely could not have coped. The best of Gluck moves at the pace of the religious ceremonial which it often includes; and without Wagner's own genius the slow-rolling symphony which he calls a music-drama, its voice parts often written to suit the orchestral score, and the characters declaiming at length and in turn like speakers at a congress, would be among the most funereal entertainments offered in the theatre, for it would lack even the *allure* of ceremonial.

Let it not be supposed that I am less than a devoted Wagnerian, or that I fail to enjoy those Gluck operas which in his own day were rarely enjoyed outside Paris. Partly by adding to and partly by changing conventions, Gluck and Wagner genuinely achieved musical drama. They secured the consistent movement of their plots, with music that grew by its own processes and therefore expressed more than the words of the drama. Fortunately for us, Wagner's practice contradicted some of his written theories and Gluck's practice contradicts many writers who attribute to him theories which he neither wrote nor is reliably reported to have uttered. In the best works of these two composers music is *not* the humble servant of a text. In *Orfeo* as in

Tristan, where stage movement seems at a standstill, the music carries forward the emotional advance, and we have no more right to say that the drama is suspended than we have to say that unless singers in *Figaro* are moving about the stage their music must be a set piece. I began this discussion of "musical drama" and music-drama in order to assert one fact—that whatever music-drama is, and whatever Gluck's reform opera was, neither achievement can be described as "the shaping and modelling of music to the form and substance of life in quick motion". The only works, apart from those by living composers whom I will not assess, which seem to me to approach this Mozartian achievement while adopting some of the methods of music-drama are the last two operas of Verdi and certain scenes in *Boris Godunoff*.

Because *The Tempest* is as much a drama as *Twelfth Night*, I cannot see why *Così* should be considered less dramatic than, say, *Don Giovanni*, nor why either of them should be thought to contain less musical drama than a so-called music-drama. After centuries of criticism of the lyric stage, each new writer about the relations between music and drama is under an obligation to define the second term. The trouble with *Figaro* is not that this or that part is undramatic but that it does not continue the kind of musical drama that is proposed in its first two acts—yes, even in the first act, for the drama is hardly arrested by arias which present, and give us insight into some of the characters of this exquisite microcosm. If Mozart and Da Ponte had finished *Figaro* so that the whole were consistent with the first half, particularly in the pace at which the action advances, their work would have been not only the most nearly perfect of operas but also one of the very greatest of works for the stage. And so I think it is, even after being rebuked for trying to steal the show with a mere Curzio.

Sibelius and his Critics

BY

BERNARD RANDS

COMMENTING in 1931 on Sibelius' second Symphony, Scott Goddard wrote,

"It astonishes one coming fresh on it today, not so much by the intrinsic beauty of its music, . . . (but) the way in which the thought moves. There is a sensation of deliberate guidance in the music. The hearer becomes profoundly intent on questions of method".¹

Since Sibelius' work first became known in this country, musicians—executants, critics and the more enlightened of the listening public—have been attracted to explorations of his method and technique of composition. This does not mean to imply that Sibelius has arrested the attention of musicians and critics generally. The contrary is true, for until quite recently the interest shown in his work was confined to a few, within whose small circle he is admired to an extreme degree. This admiration and appreciation has not always been the result of a common agreement on matters of technique and questions of method. Critics have differed considerably (and will no doubt continue to do so) in their theories on this delicate subject. Diametrically opposed theories and explanations have not prevented their inventors from reaching a common sincere appreciation of the music. Apart from this small nucleus of ardent admirers there is the mass of critics, practical musicians and listeners who have almost entirely ignored his work, or dismissed it as being the product of

"a horny-handed son of the soil, a kind of semi-illiterate, natural genius, expressing himself awkwardly in a quaint musical vernacular".²

Sibelius' creative life spanned what may well be recorded as the most exciting, challenging, unsettled and confused period in the whole history of music. A period which saw the growth of iconoclasts and experimenters, many of whom had little to offer but novel and interesting creations which aroused controversies and antagonisms, while at the same time allowing such a figure as Sibelius to pass relatively unnoticed in the flood of second-rate talent. To what extent it was a period of change is illustrated in a comparison between César Franck's string Quartet "in" D major, which came approximately at the beginning of Sibelius' creative period, and Bartók's fourth Quartet "on" or "about" C, which corresponds with the end of this period.

Some feel that his musical language is essentially that of the "Post-Romantic" period, and in spite of the wealth of personal touches and characteristics which are purely individual, he was a composer living entirely in the

¹ *Music & Letters*, 1931, p. 159. This was written shortly after the Columbia recording of the second Symphony became available in this country. The Symphony itself was by this time twenty-eight years old.

² *Sibelius*, by Cecil Gray, chapter 3, p. 40.

Tristan, where stage movement seems at a standstill, the music carries forward the emotional advance, and we have no more right to say that the drama is suspended than we have to say that unless singers in *Figaro* are moving about the stage their music must be a set piece. I began this discussion of "musical drama" and music-drama in order to assert one fact—that whatever music-drama is, and whatever Gluck's reform opera was, neither achievement can be described as "the shaping and modelling of music to the form and substance of life in quick motion". The only works, apart from those by living composers whom I will not assess, which seem to me to approach this Mozartian achievement while adopting some of the methods of music-drama are the last two operas of Verdi and certain scenes in *Boris Godunoff*.

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nineteenth-century world of musical thought, and consequently his significance for, and impact on the contemporary world is inherently limited. Others, whilst believing this to be fundamentally true are prepared to concede that Sibelius, along with Richard Strauss and Rachmaninov, was still able to use the old system in a virile and creative manner, but that ultimately they will be judged as standing at the end of a long tradition. There is however, one piece of common ground for agreement; Sibelius' non-conformity to standard European types. This particular aspect of his work has been the direct cause of much adverse criticism, and is certainly one of the main contributory factors to his relative absence from the musical life and thought of several European countries. In Italy and France his work is scarcely known while German critics and performers appear to find him

"too unorthodox a symphonist to be highly regarded in the ancestral home of the orthodox symphony".³

Apart from his native country, it is only in the English speaking countries and in particular the United Kingdom and the United States that it has taken root.

The atmosphere and spirit of Sibelius' music have been described as an utterance that reflects the colour of nature in Finland and the temper and thought of the people.⁴ Cecil Gray, for many years considered to be the English authority on Sibelius, went to considerable trouble to establish that the composer's direct ancestral background was basically Swedish and that from the point of view of blood and race he was "overwhelmingly Swedish, not Finnish". The composer himself expressed the view that environment and tradition are of greater importance in the formation of national traits than are racial origins. One cannot deny however that throughout the whole range of Sibelius' work from the first important creation *En Saga*, op. 2, to *Tapiola* the last of importance, there is some distinctive element, prevailing spirit, unmistakable tone which defies satisfactory description. One critic, trying to crystallize his thoughts on this subject, finally attributed it to the idea that

"Sibelius' inspiration is that of a spirit wandering in gentle or gloomy mood through the woods and fields of his native land".

There can be little doubt that his physical environment had an influence in formulating this intangible quality, as it influences all composers to a greater or lesser degree, but this is a precarious subject, and to what extent it has a definite influence is a matter for conjecture.

At this point it seems convenient to refer to the differing schools of thought on the subject of nationalism in the music of Sibelius. Suffice it to say that the main conflict here occurred between Niemann who rather misleadingly asserted that the art of Sibelius was "the musical expression of the Finnish folk-soul", and Gray who "debunked" this theory in no uncertain manner. Niemann tends to give the impression that Sibelius' style is a direct result of Finnish folk-song idioms. Gray rightly maintains that Sibelius was never a

³ *Modern Music and Musicians*, McNaught, chapter 10, p. 152.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

nationalist in the sense that "The Five" were, and argues that were it not for ill-founded preconceived ideas in the minds of listeners, it would be impossible to identify anything specifically Finnish in his work at all.

Considerable variation of thought and opinion has been expressed about the symphonies. These, generally speaking, are his best creations, but even their claim to be symphonies has been disputed. This attitude has been most prevalent in Germany, the home of the orthodox symphony. With reference to this, McNaught gives a broad definition of the symphony as follows:

"A series of three or four movements that vary in speed and rhythm and in tone and spirit, but are so related in the grain that one is the complement of the others in an artistic whole, each movement being cast in a form to which complete artistic expression naturally shapes itself in the particular composer's hands".⁵

and is adamant in his belief that the symphonies of Sibelius are covered by this definition. He argues that forms are not the all important, changeless imperative of composition but rather they are representative of the age and convenient to the composer's phase of thought and expression. Brahms' musical language demanded a different adaptation of form from that of Haydn. Liszt and Berlioz tried to balance the symphonic and the descriptive elements in their expression. Strauss abandoned the symphony and became wholly descriptive. But, McNaught continues:

"To disqualify such a composer for his avoidance of sonata form is to view sonata form as a rule imposed upon music from without instead of an observance that arose from the temporary needs of the art".⁶

It may well be this factor that is largely responsible for the conservative attitude and the slow, tentative acknowledgement of Sibelius' work.

The subject of form in Sibelius' music is one on which the critics and writers have enjoyed a considerable amount of agreement. We have seen above that he qualifies as a symphonist without being restricted by an adherence to out-moded forms. There still remains in his work however the classical division of a work into movements—generally three or four. The designs in the symphonies are quickly completed causing them to divide naturally into three or four movements, but without bearing any close relation to the sonata forms. In the first symphony these traditional forms are evident neither as a necessity nor a convention, "but as a convenience which may not be convenient another time".⁷ This is true, for in the fourth Symphony, for example, they no longer exert any influence on the structure of the music. Much adverse criticism has been levelled at Sibelius for his indifference to the loss of those qualities which many felt were only attainable by the use of sonata forms. If this loss was so great, what element is it in the second Symphony which prompted Scott Goddard's acclamation that it appeared "to manifest abilities of symphonic construction as profound as Beethoven's, and more novel and stimulating than anything since his nine"? It follows that his intention and his achievement

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁷ *Essays in Musical Analysis—The Symphony*, Vol. 2, p. 122—Tovey.

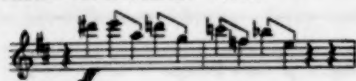
were different from his predecessors who worked in the traditional forms. Tovey likens the fifth Symphony to a Bach toccata for order of architecture.

The one aspect of Sibelius' work which has provoked probably more comment and study than any other is his use of "germ-motives". For the most part, critics have viewed this from almost the same angle. Gray was one of the first to comment on this and since then others have enlarged upon it. Tovey, for example, describes it as a scheme building itself up out of fragments until a full-sized theme arrives as a supreme climax, as opposed to the working out of alternate Exposition, Development and Recapitulation with essentially dramatic and narrative effects throughout. This observation is similar to Gray's and is upheld by the majority of writers on Sibelius. There is a great element of truth in it. A study of most of his works and particularly the symphonies and the Quartet, *Voces Intimae*, will quickly reveal the way in which he uses this "germ-motive" to generate the consequent ideas and thoughts, permeating the whole structure of the work and imparting a very definite sense of unity. The desire for this sense of unity is of course an old one, and each composer or generation of composers has offered a solution which satisfied their requirements. In some sonatas of the seventeenth century we find an attempt to solve the problem by using a theme which occurs throughout the work, like a thread linking the several movements. This can be, and was in many instances detrimental to the individuality of the movements. The composers of the classical period seemed to be less interested or less troubled by this problem, for the main relationship between movements of sonata-form works by Haydn and Mozart is that of key. This does not mean that thematic relationships do not exist in music of this period but that it seems to be of less importance. With Beethoven there is a greater significance in the relationship between movements, be it choice of key, "germ-motives" in more than one movement, or a direct reference to a theme previously heard, as in the fifth Symphony for example. This "theme-recurring" or "cyclic" form idea became a vogue with the romantics. Schumann, Chopin, Brahms, Dvořák, César Franck and others used it in many of their characteristic works. But here again, as in the seventeenth century, the difficulty lay in preserving the individuality of each movement within a unified whole. Sibelius found his solution in the use of "germ-motives" which on occasions consisted only of a characteristic interval. In the second Symphony the interval of a falling fifth pervades the whole work and "themes", phrases and accompanying figures continually refer to it. So the movements become related in the grain.

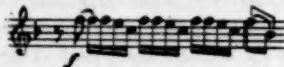
Ex. 1. 1st Movement—W.W.



Ex. 2. 1st Movement—W.W.



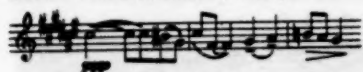
Ex. 3. 2nd Movement—Strings.



Ex. 4. 2nd Movement—W.W.



Ex. 5. 2nd Movement—Violins.



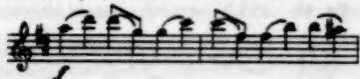
Ex. 7. 4th Movement.



Ex. 6. 3rd Movement—Solo Oboe.



Ex. 8. 4th Movement—Violins.



An analysis of the string Quartet will also reveal the use of a falling fifth as a unifying idea.

For the most part critics have agreed on this aspect of his work, but one in particular felt that although this was theoretically an interesting possibility there are "almost insuperable difficulties in the way of its practical realization". In a challenging article⁸ the writer questions Gray's theory on the grounds that patterns in sound do not arrange themselves effectively in the ways that are effective for other *media*. He maintains that sound, being intangible, requires a "taking off place" to which reference can be made in order that musical form can have solidity, and in an analysis of the fourth Symphony he sets out to refute Gray's theory. He shows in detail how the entire Symphony is based on the first two bars of the first movement, and that thematically all the movements are related because they are variants of the basic motive.

Gray on the other hand, in rather a sweeping statement, tends to mislead his readers when he asserts that

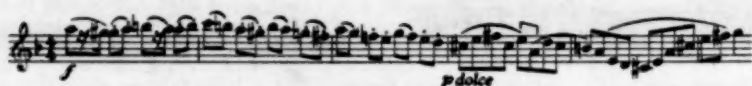
"... within each individual symphony, one finds the same strong contrast between the constituent movements. They bear a spiritual relationship to each other, but they are always formally independent, self-sufficient entities, capable of standing alone by themselves. This is in consequence of the composer's consistent avoidance of thematic interconnection between the movements".⁹

He seems to imply that it is a fault that the various movements of one work should bear more than a spiritual relationship to each other. Hill poses the question as to why it is a fault to have something "more tangible than the rather mystical affinity". He also asks why the absolute independence of each movement does not destroy the unity of the work as a whole. These are logical questions left unanswered by Gray. It is agreed that the movements of his symphonies do bear a spiritual relationship, that they are related in the grain and that at the same time their independence and individuality are to a large extent preserved. But to claim that thematic interconnection between them is not present is to ignore the facts. The truth can only be found in a close examination of the scores, but here a few short quotations from the string Quartet will illustrate the point in that particular work.

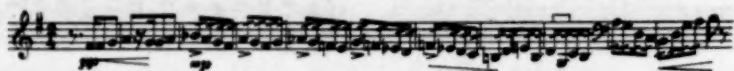
⁸ William G. Hill: "Some Aspects of Form in the Symphonies of Sibelius". *MUSIC REVIEW*, Vol. 10, 1949, p. 166.

⁹ *Sibelius*, Cecil Gray, p. 161.

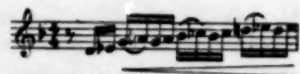
Ex. 9. 1st Movement.



Ex. 10. 2nd Movement—almost identical with Ex. 9 except for the difference of key.



Ex. 11. 1st Movement.



Ex. 13. 1st Movement.



Ex. 12. 2nd Movement.



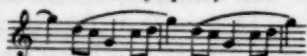
Ex. 14. 5th Movement.



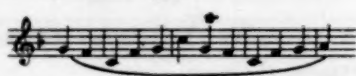
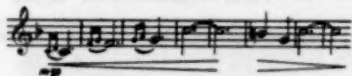
An analysis of the sixth Symphony will show that there is a "germ-motive" on which the movements are founded thematically. In the third Symphony quotations from the first movement are made in the finale. And so one could go on pointing out instances of this amazing technique of variation. It seems clear that his technique and method was a combination of these two main aspects—the extraction of all possible musical value from a small basic motive, allowing it to permeate the whole work, and the direct references to themes or phrases already heard in previous movements, which themselves have their roots in the motive. In using this method Sibelius no more impairs the unity of his works than did Beethoven in the fifth and ninth symphonies, where themes are brought back in such a way that they cannot fail to be noticed by the listener.

It is worthy of note here, and helps to put this question in its true perspective, that Hill detected some similarity between themes of different symphonies. He quotes the following examples.

Ex. 15. Third symphony—finale. Bars 306-7.



Ex. 16. Fourth symphony—2nd movement. Bar 13 and Bar 239.



Ex. 17. Fifth symphony—1st movement. Bar 1 and Bar 163.

This raises the question of constructive imagination and imaginative construction in composition. How much of the relationship of themes and phrases to the "germ-motive" was due to a conscious effort on the part of the composer, and to what extent did it occur unconsciously. On examining the thematic construction of Beethoven's string Quartet in F major, op. 135, Schönberg maintained that this was unimportant and stated that

"... invented principles of composition are always less important than those which are discovered unconsciously. If more happens than one can think out, this can only happen in the subconscious".¹⁰

The composer himself is the only one who could possibly have answered this question, but it is obvious that the formal idea is an inevitable part of the works themselves. It is surely Sibelius' greatest contribution to form.

During the greater part of his life Sibelius' music was sadly neglected by the music world. The last twenty years have shown an ever increasing interest in his work. Scores of the music are readily available, and performances are more frequent. His death may bring about a sincere reconsideration of his music and with it a revaluation.

¹⁰ Josef Rufer: *Composition with Twelve Notes*, chapter I, p. 12.

The Theme and Variation in modern Music

BY

ELSIE PAYNE

THE term "theme and variation" does not so much signify a distinct form as a tendency to form or a formal style. As such it can be applied to any music which is undeveloping and static in character and which presents its material in a series of different guises or contexts. It applies not only to the recognized variation forms—the air and variation, the ground, *chaconne* and *passacaglia*—but to much that is not so labelled. The essentials of variation form, in fact, have probably existed as long as music itself has existed, and in the early stages of musical evolution were inseparable from all the other aspects of musical form. As musical forms expanded and became more differentiated, so variation styles tended to maintain their own particular forms as well as their own emotional complexion; but in modern times again they have come to penetrate all *genres*.

How did this re-penetration of variation styles into all *genres* come about? It was provoked basically by the poverty of musical resource which resulted from the disintegration of the orthodox diatonic systems at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. The disintegration of diatonicism meant the weakening of the functional or dramatic power of harmony and of modulation—the loss, therefore, of one of the greatest means of musical development and prolongation. Alternatives or compensations were not easily or immediately discovered, though superficial ones were at once forthcoming—changes and increases in dynamics and in orchestral sonorities, for instance, and the addition of new ideas, each perhaps with greater rhythmic vitality than the last. Composers often again tended to base their music on a definite programme. This was not necessarily formulated in detail, but it was sufficient to bind together a succession of multifarious and musically disconnected ideas which were thus able to provide the variety and contrast previously afforded by harmonic and tonal event. (The ballets of Stravinsky, especially *Le Sacre du Printemps*, are outstanding examples.) Purely abstract music, on the other hand, tended inevitably to get shorter and shorter, lacking the scope and the urge for development.

Eventually, after years of incoherence and experimentation, honest and effectual alternatives arose. Each composer, of course, had to find his own solution (even as with the problems of tonality and modality themselves). One solution was found along contrapuntal lines: for by the juxtaposition of unrelated *strata*, tonal, rhythmic and/or structural dichotomies may be produced which give rise to a certain musico-dramatic tension. But perhaps the most generally accepted solution lay in the change of emphasis from textural

and contextual to thematic discussion and development. Thematic discussion, it is true, has always played an important part in musical development, but only one part: now it has become of primary importance. And to a large extent this means thematic variation.

There are two distinct ways in which the elements of variation can generate musical development in modern styles. The one is based on the serial or twelve-note technique, the other—a freer procedure—on the conception of the germinal theme.

The twelve-note system is, in spite of the devious adjustments and modifications that are made by its different exponents, indubitably rigid *qua* system, and the possibilities of variation, therefore, are severely controlled. For in true serial composition, the row or basic series which underlies the thematic material cannot be changed at all—it cannot be added to or subtracted from: which means that the theme can neither be embellished nor refocused in the form of a variant. Nevertheless in twelve-note music the principle of variation, sometimes referred to as “endless”, sometimes as “developing” variation, is all-embracing. The twelve-note theme, in fact, possesses enormous possibilities of variation, but of a different order from and far less easily recognized than the earlier and more obvious types. It may, for instance, appear in either its inverted, retrograde or inverted retrograde form, and in any of these forms it may be transposed to start on any of the twelve notes of the chromatic scale. And there are more complex ways of re-presentation than these fundamental ones. The theme, for example, though exact as regards notes and note succession, may have one of its notes transposed an octave higher or lower, to produce a melodic line which thus has a subtly different individuality. The theme, moreover, which in any case is generally conceived as a two, three or even four-fragment phrase, may be cut up and its different segments variously combined—perhaps in different succession, or perhaps in alternating ordinary and retrograde versions. Again, the theme may be presented in a changed rhythmic guise. And, of course, it may in many different ways be resolved into texture. The notes of the theme, or notes extracted from the theme may be used harmonically, as chords; or the theme may be used to propagate a contrapuntal texture. It may, for instance, run, migrant fashion, through the whole fabric (as in the first movement of Schönberg’s Quartet no. 4, op. 37, beginning at bar 25, or in the second movement of Webern’s Quartet, op. 28, starting at bar 19), the theme itself unchanged, but each separate strand becoming part theme, part new. The following examples from these Schönberg and Webern works are given to illustrate a few of the possibilities of dodeca-phonous variation.¹

It will be seen that the row is used by Schönberg with some degree of elasticity, though not by Webern. It is used still more freely by Berg—and indeed by many composers who have come since the three initial exponents, who have in many cases incorporated the basic tenets of serial composition

¹ For reasons of space the most complex textural variations cannot be quoted, but these can be studied from the miniature scores, the Webern in Universal Ed., the Schönberg published by Schirmer Inc. N.Y.

into a much freer and partially tonal system. Schönberg, though never as free as Berg, does not hesitate sometimes to introduce new material, and in his later works he has, as he has himself acknowledged, frequently touched

Ex. 1a

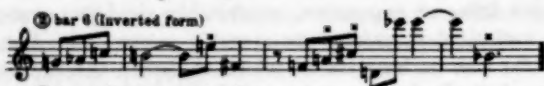
1st movement

(Schönberg—Quartet No. 4, Op. 37)

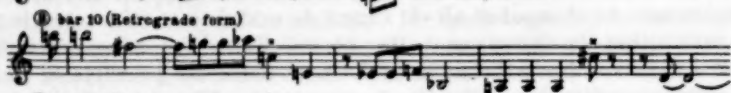
① Theme (x: octave displacement)



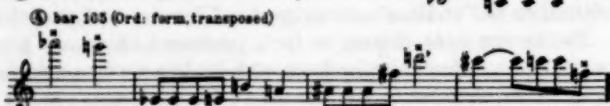
② bar 6 (Inverted form)



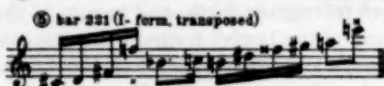
③ bar 10 (Retrograde form)



④ bar 103 (Ord. form, transposed)



⑤ bar 221 (I. form, transposed)



2nd movement

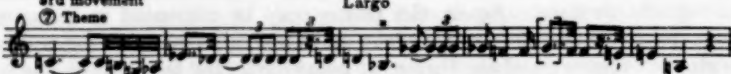
⑥ bar 423 (I. form, transposed)



3rd movement

Largo

⑦ Theme



⑧ bar 655 (I. form) (1st & 2nd Vlns.)



upon a temporary tonality; he has added new figures, has subtracted or changed particular notes of the row, and has many times (as shown in Ex. 1a) repeated notes in his themes, thus giving preference to certain notes of the row. With Schönberg the row always is, in fact, an intuitive rather than an exact progenitor of musical thought.

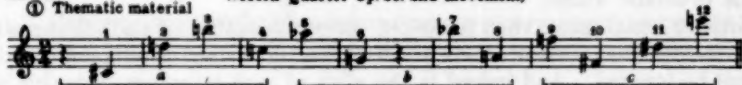
Inasmuch as the twelve-note system is used with flexibility, there is, of course, more scope for variation than when it is used rigidly. But all serial

music is rich in variation. The principle of variation, indeed, empowers the complete musical processes of all serial compositions, whether strict or free, and whether written in acknowledged variation form or not. But can it therefore be said that all serial music is fundamentally a static, reiterative and undramatic utterance, as variation works or movements have tended to be since

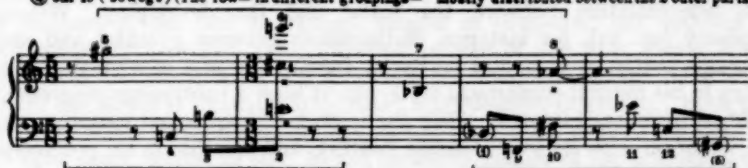
Ex. 1b

Webern Quartet Op. 28. 2nd movement)

① Thematic material



③ bar 10 ("bewegt") (The row—in different groupings— mostly distributed between the 2 outer parts.)



⑤ bar 86 ("wieder gemächlich") (Groups again re-adjusted: ord. and retrograde versions of row used, and certain notes diverted into other parts.)

(pizz.) 1st V.



the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? Is it always—to use a phrase of Tovey's²—"the expression of sublime inactivity"? It is significant perhaps that, although the two terms "endless variation" and "developing variation" are used in connection with twelve-note music, they are used very indiscriminately—there being such little, at any rate obvious, distinction between that which is endless or static in character and that which is developing or eventful. Webern's music and all that which adheres closely to the twelve-note system, is far more a matter of endless than of developing variation. And inevitably. For in so far as there can be no thematic additions or subtractions, no actual changes but only readjustments, so there can be no real thematic growth or development. And since no acknowledgement is made of dissonance in fully atonal music, there can be no deliberate harmonic tension, no indication in that sense of conflict and very little of event. Discussion, of course, there may be. The themes may be cut up, re-arranged and so re-focussed, or presented in different rhythmic guise to suggest greater vitality.

² From the chapter on variations in his book, *Beethoven*.

They may also be discussed texturally by means of contrapuntal devices including those of canon and *stretto*. Rhythmic dichotomies again may possibly arise as the result of differently constructed contrapuntal *strata*—but such dichotomies rarely appear with the force that they do, for instance, in Stravinsky and also in Rubbra (where fragmentary and halting melodies often pull against virile, insistent and forward-driving *ostinati*, to suggest dramatic conflict). What discussion there is in serial music, in fact, is only of very subtle dramatic value.

Strictly serial music then is almost entirely a matter of endless variation. Nevertheless what elements there are of drama and thus of developing variation cannot be ignored. And indeed in the work of each composer of twelve-note music there would seem to be an urge, if only a subconscious one, to suggest some differentiation between the static and the developing. Webern's Symphony (op. 21), for instance, distinguishes between eventful and static expression partly by pace and partly by form. The first movement, though written in his natural economical style, has at least a continuous progress and a gradual increase of interest; while the second is in so-named variation form, each variation with its own separate context, and episodic in its progression. Schönberg also affirms some difference of character between the two, and more noticeably in his case since his is naturally a more eventful and flexible expression. In the fourth Quartet, for instance, there is a marked contrast of character between the first and the third movements, which are the key-movements of this work. The first movement is marked *Allegro molto energico*, the third *Largo*. Both movements (as is usual in serial procedure) are based on the same row (though transposed), but the themes are, in their first appearance, eminently distinct and contrasted. The theme of the first movement (as shown in Ex. 1a) has itself no marked originality. But it is such that its inverted and retrograde forms are very different from one another and can thus propagate variations that are definitely individual and seemingly unrelated. And the notes of each of its four sections are such as to produce a strikingly different set of intervals: so that the theme can, when it is cut up, provoke textures which vary considerably from one to another. The theme, in fact, is one which depends upon texture for its consummation, and the maximum use is made of every device of melodic and textural variation (including transposition) that is possible within the limits of serial writing. The movement is continuous, not sectional, and the texture grows into increasingly long and complex units—units so complex that the theme becomes completely submerged within texture, and so long that (whether the term be actually allowed or not) the feeling of dissonance becomes acute.

In the *Largo* the theme, as well as its behaviour, is notably different. Even here, it must be admitted, there would seem to be more complexity and suggestion of development than in comparable movements by other composers: for Schönberg naturally inclines to a more eventful musical statement. But even so, there are recognisable and vital contrasts between the musical processes of this and the first movement. The theme of the first movement, though divisible into fragments, is a single conception, and the movement is

monothematic; but the *Largo* has two themes, the second of which (Ex. 2) is contrasted in character, and fashioned from the inverted form of the row. Its

Ex. 2 (Schönberg, Quartet No. 4, *Largo*)
 bar 618 (Inverted form of the row and so distributed among the parts to make different melodic lines.)

first theme, moreover, is itself comprised of two distinct sections, not, as with the sections of the first movement, similar in character, but opposed and complementary (see Ex. 1a). The first phrase of the first theme is very rhythmical, but freely so: it is a rhapsodic, inconsequent phrase. The second part of the theme is virtually arrhythmic, a ruminative utterance. Both parts are, as it were, thematic tendencies rather than fully defined themes. (In this they come nearer, in fact, to the germinal themes of the non-serial composers.) The second theme, on the other hand, is a complete and more highly polished one, somewhat ornate and precise in rhythmic pattern as in note succession. There is, therefore, much greater variety of thematic character in this movement than in the first. But this does not lead, as might perhaps be expected, to a more complicated and eventful development. On the contrary, the working out here is less intricate. For since there is a more varied thematic idea, there is less reliance on the complexities of dodecaphonic logic. The quasi-development of this movement, in fact, is abundant and spontaneous, episodic rather than continuous, and the overall effect is one of improvisation. All the thematic material undergoes a certain degree of discussion; some, it is true, more along the lines of developing than endless variation. At the quasi-climax, for instance (starting at bar 655), the texture is intensified by virtue of the contrapuntal juxtaposition of two forms of the basic series. This is a complex, synthetic variation, but for the most part the process is simpler, more relaxed and episodic. Rufer points out one passage, for instance,³ which serves to break up the feeling of development and even of continuity. It is a two-bar passage preceding the quasi-climax (bars 636-7). To quote:—this two-bar phrase “does not develop, but, as it were, marks time and, corresponding to its function, contains short figures which do not require or make one expect any particular kind of continuation”. It does not introduce material outside that furnished by the series, but it uses this in such a way that it has no development or even variation value.

Much that has been said about the variation styles of serial music applies equally to the variation elements in modern music that is not serial—to that, at any rate, which is also free from the limitations of the old tonal and modal

³ Josef Rufer, *Composition with Twelve Notes*, p. 153.

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Much that has been said about the variation styles of serial music applies equally to the variation elements in modern music that is not serial—to that, at any rate, which is also free from the limitations of the old tonal and modal

³ Josef Rufer, *Composition with Twelve Notes*, p. 153.

systems (it would not necessarily apply to some contemporary music which is, in principle, a throw-back to the nineteenth century). For, in so far as these other modern techniques also repudiate precise tonal and modal systems, so they also are deprived of the dramatic force of harmonic and tonal change and development in the orthodox sense of the word. All modern music inclines, necessarily, to be less obviously dramatic and eventful than music of the classical and romantic periods: the difference between event and non-event is a far more subtle one, and often misleading. Nevertheless composers of non-serial music possess certain resources which composers of twelve-note music do not, and are also free from some of their restrictions: which means that the distinction between their developing and undeveloping movements is often more striking and convincing. And although with them, as with the serial composers, the elements of variation have come to penetrate all *genres*, they are perhaps better able to sustain specific or so-called variation movements. In these precise variation movements their resources are very great indeed. Not only can they employ the naïver devices of thematic and textural elaboration, not only can they re-present their themes in the form of variants, not only can they also use all the twelve-note methods of inversion and retrograde formations, but, in addition, they may further their scope by starting with a purely germinal theme or idea. Not all do this, of course. One cannot generalize about non-serial even as much as one can about serial composers. But some of the more notable have much in common, especially with regard to their use of the germinal theme.

To say that variations may be built up from a germinal theme might seem perhaps to be a contradictory statement, since the term "germinal" implies development, while the essence of variation form is its undeveloping character. And it is certainly true that the germinal theme is generally used to propagate eventful, developing music. But not entirely. Where, in fact, the use of a germinal theme is a powerful aspect of a composer's style, he tends also to use a germinal theme—though in a special way—for purposes of refocus and variation. The use of a germinal theme is not, of course, a purely modern innovation. Themes have probably been used thus, intermittently, throughout all periods of musical creation. But of late—since the time of Sibelius—it has become far more widespread, and in so far as it gives rise to thematic growth instead of eventful discussion and conflict, it has become a compensation for the loss of harmonic and tonal power. Composers who work on the principle of the germinal theme all have to make some differentiation between its use in eventful and uneventful movements. In eventful movements, the function of the germinal unit or idea is to reach out into a continuous and developing succession of thematic and textural emanations. Some of the themes may be variants of one another, but in any case each growth or emanation that appears as part of the rise to climax is an advance on the last in individuality, elaboration or complexity. (If there are a series of climaxes instead of a single one, the emanations change their character accordingly.) And where new themes are introduced (second, third subjects, transition or development themes), these generally have some organic reliance upon the germinal idea. But in

variation styles the germinal unit reaches out, not into a continually developing expanse, but into a series of thematic and textural emanations each of which reveals an isolated, unique aspect of development from the basic unit. There is a certain degree of development in such variation styles in that each emanation or variation is a development from the germinal material; and in so far as this is so, it may be said that the two styles converge more noticeably in such music than in music of the past, though less than in serial music. One emanation does not, however, grow out of the previous one, but only out of the main generic material. There is some advantage, in fact, in introducing this one element of development, since the variations thus possess their own detail and far more individuality than with any other method of variation writing. They would often appear to be fully separated from one another.

The extent to which variations based thus on a germinal concept are truly characteristic of music in variation form, depends both on the character of the concept itself and on its behaviour. Sometimes the preliminary concept is actually a fully developed melody—and yet it is used as a germ. In such a case certain suitable aspects are extracted and used germinally. But, for the most part, the germinal idea is an eminently simple one, one which in its first manifestation is only partially defined. And in variation movements—in all movements, in fact, that are reflective and static in character, episodic in form—it is such as to create variety rather than intricacy. Its germinal potentiality is for improvisatory or rhapsodic rather than logical or developing thought. The unit or idea itself varies in the degree to which its germination has already taken place. It often consists of no more than one or two melodic progressions; but it is generally presented so as to give some further indication of its potentiality—it may be by a special rhythmic pattern, by a particular harmony or setting, or by the nature of its initial behaviour.

An example will best illustrate the way in which the germinal idea of works with variation characteristics are conceived and used; though in choosing a single example, it must be underlined that this is by no means representative in detail of all modern works that are conceived in this way. For no two works are exactly alike even in principle, and certainly not in the way that principles are carried out. This example, however—Bartók's violin Concerto⁴—is especially illustrative of that which is most significant in free, modern variation forms. It is chosen, moreover, not only because it is indicative of a contemporary style, but because it is one in which the same basic generic concept empowers all the movements. This is unusual, of course, even in Bartók. But it makes a good example, for it shows more clearly than could be shown by reference to a less thematically connected work the difference between the types of variations that emerge from a germinal source in eventful and in uneventful or true variation movements. Only the middle movement here is a definite "theme and variations", episodic in form and single in its overall mood: but all the movements are thematically related to one another. The whole work then possesses elements of variation. Not only are the themes of

⁴ Miniature score by Boosey and Hawkes.

the two outer movements variants of one another, but that of the middle movement, though too remote from the others to be considered as a variant, also emanates from the same generic source. The Concerto as a whole may, in fact, be considered as a complex and closely knit variation work. Each movement, by proceeding from the same germinal material, becomes a variant of the others: but the first, and still more the third, are animated and eventful, while the second is of true, static variation character, and the core of the expression.

The basic germ of the whole work may be said to be—quite simply—the interval of a fourth (and even this is used, as will be seen, with elasticity), with the subsidiary interval of a minor third. And the four-bar passages which appear as introductions to the first and third movements (see Ex. 3a, 1 and 3),

Ex. 3a Bartók—Violin Concerto
 Germinal material (1st & 3rd movements)
 1st m. (1) (lower strings)

(pizz.)
(Harp-octaves)

3rd m. (2) (Horns—actual pitch)
(Strings—octaves)

are the first projections of this basic interval into musical form. These may, therefore, be called the germinal ideas of the separate movements. Each possesses a modicum of individuality, germane to the particular movement: each is, at the same time, a variant of the other. The melodic line in each case is very sparse, and there is little rhythmic definition (though it is somewhat stronger in 3 than in 1). The basic fourth is actually omitted from the beginning of the melodic line in 3: it is there by implication only—by reference to the melodies of the foregoing movements and still more by its inclusion in the context. The contexts of both 1 and 3 are, in fact, important. The reiterative chords of 1 are not themselves of direct generic value, but—being diatonic chords and only slightly dissonant with the melody—they give some indication of the tonal character of the movement. The accompanying semi-quaver figures of 3 again have a comparable bearing upon the nature of the subsequent expression of this movement. These are far more arresting than the chords in the first movement, and are so constructed (starting as they do, *appoggiatura*-fashion, a semitone below the dominant) that they span the distance of a tritone. This structure is very significant in relation to the movement as a whole, and characteristic of Bartók's musical thought generally. Bartók has a marked predilection for both the interval of a perfect fourth

(an interval which, incidentally, is very prevalent in Hungarian folk music) and of a tritone. The tritone is indeed responsible for much of the more chromatic and harsh elements in his music. Often it is used purely as a chromatic progression (produced by splitting the twelve-note scale literally in half), but by no means always; and it is by varying his method of producing the tritone that many of the subtle and unexpected nuances of his music are created. The tritone may, in fact, occur as part of a diatonic stretch, and it is thus that it appears in this introduction to the third movement (though later in the movement a more chromatic procedure becomes operative), the E sharp being, as it were, a leading note to the dominant of B. The theme of the second movement, on the other hand (which will be further described later), rises over the interval of a tritone by virtue of its Lydian (or quasi-Lydian) foundation, and in this way acquires a slightly elusive attractiveness rather than a flavour of acerbity. Some of the most deeply significant of Bartók's expression, moreover, devolves upon his alternative use of perfect and augmented fourths. Other composers (Vaughan Williams and Rubbra, for instance) have appreciated the fluctuations of mood that can be suggested by the use of both the major and the minor third in a musical stretch; but Bartók has realized still more the subtleties of feeling that can be expressed by such a use of the fourth. Throughout the violin Concerto the two versions of the interval are exploited—the tritone produced, as has been seen, in different ways, and gaining emphasis as the work proceeds.

Ex. 3 quotes (as simply as possible) most of the important themes of the three movements. It is impossible, of course, to include all the many fragments which appear in the varied textures; and it is unnecessary to cite certain motives which are not used variation-wise either within a movement or from one movement to another. Quotation is, however, made (in section d) of the

Ex. 3d
2nd subjects in 1st & 3rd movements

2a. 1st m.

2b

2a. 3rd m.

2b

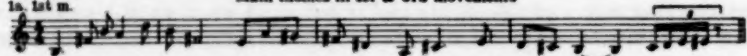
second subject material of the first and third movements—themes which, though not related to the main germinal material of the work, are related to one another.

First (in section a) the germinal material is quoted, that is, as it appears in the outer movements; then (in section b) the themes of these outer movements in so far as these are promoted by the initial germinal idea. These

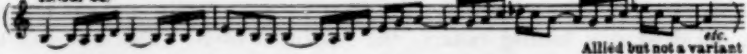
Ex. 3b

1a. 1st m.

Main themes in 1st & 3rd movements

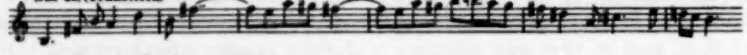


1b (bar 22)

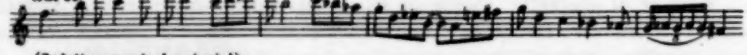


etc. Allied but not a variant

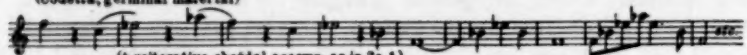
(bar 40) (Transition)



(bar 51)

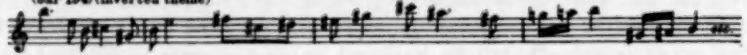


(Coda, germinal material)

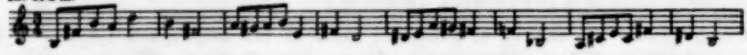


(reiterative chordal accomp. as in 3a 1.)

(bar 194) (inverted theme)



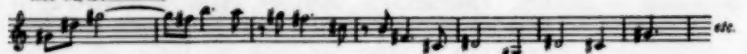
1a. 3rd m.



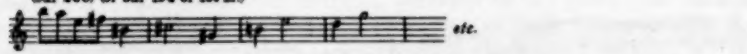
1b



(bar 64) (Transition)



(bar 260) (cf bar 194 of 1st m.)



bar 585 Coda



(4ths only)

quotations are followed (in section c) by the themes of the second movement—the movement that is most directly in variation form. This movement is actually in D, but by focusing the melodic theme on G, a Lydian effect (with the major third and the augmented fourth) is achieved. The theme is a complete one from the start (it is significant that no introductory germinal material is given here as in the other movements: there is not, therefore, even a hint of the process of development): but, as will be seen, it is not formal or symmetrical, rather meandering and rhapsodic, conducive thus (as in the case of the theme of the third movement of Schönberg's fourth Quartet, for example, and also of that in Rubbra's *collana musicale*—the last movement of his viola

Concerto, op. 75) to reflective and improvisatory musical thought. With its tonal and modal ambiguity too, the movement becomes one of elusiveness as well as of contemplation. The theme itself is not a close variant of any other,

Ex. 30

Themes of the 2nd movement

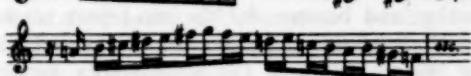
Theme Transposed to B tonality



(Theme as in wk)

Andante tranquillo

1st V.

Un poco più andante

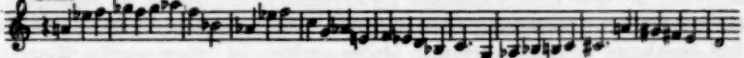
2nd V. (in B)

Un poco più tranquillo

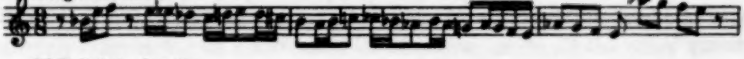
3rd V. including fragments, such as—

Più mosso

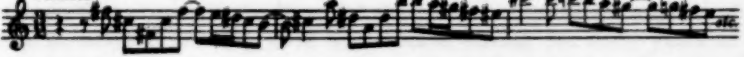
4th V. later in section

Lento

5th V.

Allievo scherzando

6th V. 2nd pt. of section

Comodo

Coda or Epilogue



but it is based on the germinal interval of a fourth, and the second phrase is a variant of the beginning of the first subject themes of the first and third movements. The phrase is first quoted transposed down a minor third (from D to B tonality) to facilitate comparison with the first movement theme. Finally, section d gives the second subjects of the first and third movements. These comprise the contrasting material in each of the movements. They do not arise from the main germinal source, though intervals of perfect and augmented fourths are again predominant. They are, in fact, contrasted less in basic

First (in section a) the germinal material is quoted, that is, as it appears in the outer movements: then (in section b) the themes of these outer movements in so far as these are promoted by the initial germinal idea. These

Ex. 3b
Main themes in 1st & 3rd movements

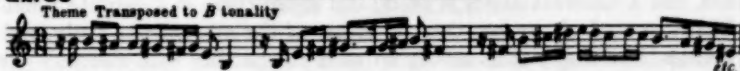
1a. 1st m.
1b (bar 22)
(bar 48) (Transition)
(bar 51)
(Coda, germinal material)
(reiterative chordal accomp. as in 3a 1.)
(bar 194) (inverted theme)
1a. 3rd m.
1b
(bar 64) (Transition)
(bar 200) (of bar 194 of 1st m.)
bar 525 Coda
(4ths only)

quotations are followed (in section c) by the themes of the second movement—the movement that is most directly in variation form. This movement is actually in D, but by focusing the melodic theme on G, a Lydian effect (with the major third and the augmented fourth) is achieved. The theme is a complete one from the start (it is significant that no introductory germinal material is given here as in the other movements: there is not, therefore, even a hint of the process of development): but, as will be seen, it is not formal or symmetrical, rather meandering and rhapsodic, conducive thus (as in the case of the theme of the third movement of Schönberg's fourth Quartet, for example, and also of that in Rubbra's *collana musicale*—the last movement of his viola

Concerto, op. 75) to reflective and improvisatory musical thought. With its tonal and modal ambiguity too, the movement becomes one of elusiveness as well as of contemplation. The theme itself is not a close variant of any other,

Ex. 3a Themes of the 2nd movement

Theme Transposed to *B* tonality



(Theme as in wk)

Andante tranquillo



1st V.

Un poco più andante



2nd V. (in B)

Un poco più tranquillo



3rd V. including fragments, such as—

Più mosso



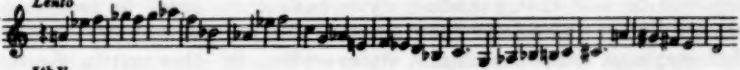
4th V. later in section

Lento



5th V.

Allegro scherzando



6th V. 2nd pt. of section

Comodo



Coda or Epilogue



but it is based on the germinal interval of a fourth, and the second phrase is a variant of the beginning of the first subject themes of the first and third movements. The phrase is first quoted transposed down a minor third (from D to B tonality) to facilitate comparison with the first movement theme. Finally, section d gives the second subjects of the first and third movements. These comprise the contrasting material in each of the movements. They do not arise from the main germinal source, though intervals of perfect and augmented fourths are again predominant. They are, in fact, contrasted less in basic

material than in structure; for instead of growing out of a simple motivic germ, these have a quasi-tone row construction. The first part of the theme (2a) is an expansive, improvisatory melodic span which contains all the notes of the chromatic scale (though with a distinct tonality and with certain notes repeated). This leads to a more individualized theme (2b). Here no note is repeated, but a different series is used, and again there is a definite tonality. The themes 2a and 2b are not thus, in either of the movements, truly twelve-note themes, but they are as nearly so as is compatible with Bartók's idiom generally and with that of this Concerto in particular, and so near as to constitute an important contrast to the other main ones. In being subsidiary and contrasting subjects only, they do not lead to thematic development or variation, but—again in keeping with the general tenor of his work—they do appear, as indicated, in these two sister movements as variants of one another.

It will be seen that, while the variations of the first and third movements belong very closely to one another and become, for the most part, slightly more complex and elaborate as the movements progress (until the end when they tend to revert almost to the simplicity of the introductory germinal material), those of the second movement are only very subtly connected with each other and with the other movements, even though they too emanate from the same germ. The Concerto thus, in spite of the fundamental unity of its material, possesses great differentiations of structural style. In this respect it—though itself in many ways an outstanding work—reflects a general tendency in modern music towards the achievement of variety through unity. Endless and developing variation indeed come very close together. And thus it may well be said that variation styles have come again to penetrate all *genres*: yet without sacrificing their essential character and value. For when the full emphasis is upon variation styles—when, in other words, the music (whether by name or merely by implication) is truly a "theme and variation", it is in modern as much as in classical times, the "expression of sublime inactivity".

Schönberg and "Expressionism"

BY

ROBERT L. HENDERSON

IN the twelve years that have passed since the first publication in Paris of René Leibowitz' *Schoenberg et son École* there has appeared an ever increasing number of books and articles devoted in whole or in part to the music and ideas of Arnold Schönberg and the Viennese School. Adorno, Eimert, Rufer, Stuckenschmidt, Searle, Antoine Golea, George Perle, Leibowitz, Schönberg himself and many others have contributed in their publications to the establishment of a substantial "twelve-note" literature, which includes not only works of a primarily didactic nature, having as their purpose the elucidation and dissemination of the principles of dodecaphonic composition, but also works of critical evaluation and philosophical judgment and speculation.

Many of the authors take as their common starting point the historical justification of the far reaching innovations of Schönberg, tracing the roots of these innovations to the extension of the traditional concepts of tonality already apparent in the later works of Wagner and the other composers of the second half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, Leibowitz, in the skilful and perceptive introductory section to his *Schoenberg et son École*, sees the twelve-note method and the work of Schönberg as the only logical outcome of the whole history of Western polyphony. In his introduction he outlines in a few deftly reasoned pages the main developments of European polyphony from its earliest extant sources, through its many ramifications and upheavals to the work of Wagner and so on to Schönberg himself.

Despite the skill with which Leibowitz carries through his plan it fails to be completely convincing as a historical justification, as do all the other attempts to account for the revolution formulated in the work of Schönberg, for the reason that they entirely disregard the general cultural atmosphere of the Vienna in which Schönberg lived and worked during the early years of the present century, that is the cultural climate in which the dodecaphonic method was born.

Although historians of the fine arts and literature have long realized the importance of taking into account the general cultural trends of an epoch, as well as its social and economic conditions, for the light they can shed on artistic and literary development, writers on music seem particularly unwilling to consider the inter-relations that exist between the general culture of a particular moment in history and its musical activity. The reason for this neglect is not difficult to find, for music, because of its very nature, is perhaps less subject to the immediate influence of the changes and developments in the various fields of human activity than are the other arts, although this influence is of necessity bound to exist. Some notable attempts have been made to place music in its social and cultural setting, to show the part played by music in

the history of ideas. Those which come most readily to mind are the outstanding volumes of Heinrich Besseler, *Die Musik des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Potsdam, 1931) and Paul Henry Láng, *Music in Western Civilization* (New York, 1941), while the papers of P. O. Kristeller, "Music and Learning in the Early Italian Renaissance",¹ and E. Lowinsky, "Music in the Culture of the Renaissance"² are of the utmost importance in more specialized fields of study. In England the numerous publications of Wilfrid Mellers never fail to give a fascinating picture of music against its social background. Apart from the historian and philosopher P. O. Kristeller, historians other than music specialists rarely give any space in their work to music as a cultural phenomenon, but notable exceptions which may be mentioned are Frances Yates' *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1947) and Frederick B. Artz' *The Mind of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1953).

That a deeper knowledge of the cultural atmosphere and the artistic movements prevalent in Vienna at the turn of the present century is essential if we are fully to appreciate the work of Arnold Schönberg has been convincingly demonstrated in the recently published volume *Espressionismo e Dodecafonia* by the Italian critic and historian Luigi Rognoni.³ Not only is this the first major Italian contribution to Schönberg literature, but it takes its place as a particularly memorable addition to that body of literature which has as its purpose the history and documentation of European music in the first half of the twentieth century.

Early in his book Signor Rognoni makes it quite clear that he has not set out "to analyze systematically all the works of the three great representatives of musical expressionism", for other writers, and especially René Leibowitz, have already devoted many pages to just this task. On the contrary his purpose is rather to "devote analysis and critical reflection to only those works of Schönberg, Berg and Webern which are the most significant in characterizing that process which carried Schönberg and the formative musicians of his school from the initial 'dissolution of tonality' (as for example in the *Kammersymphonie*, op. 9) and the 'suspension of tonality' (as in the *Drei Klavierstücke*, op. 11) to the extreme limits of atonality (achieved in the 'abstraction' of the *Sechs kleine Klavierstücke*, op. 19) and the reorganization of the world of sonority into a new synthesis: dodecaphony (from the Suite, op. 25)".

What Signor Rognoni has in fact set out to show is the close relationship existing between Schönberg, Berg and Webern and the expressionist movement, a movement which not only dominated the artistic life of the German speaking world in the first decade of the century, but which also gave full expression to those tendencies in music, apparent since the time of Wagner, of which the twelve-note method was a direct result.

With great learning and assurance the author gradually builds up a scholarly picture of the whole expressionist movement, giving valuable insight into its

¹ *Journal of Renaissance and Baroque Music*, Vol. I (1947), p. 255.

² *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XV (1954), p. 509.

³ Luigi Rognoni, *Espressionismo e Dodecafonia*, Einaudi (Turin, 1954).

ideals and the aims of the artists and writers who were its chief representatives. This he partly achieves by a wealth of quotation taken directly from the published works of these same writers and painters—Wassily Kandinsky, Hermann Bahr, Franz Marc, Thomas von Hartmann, Stefan George and others. It is not without significance that the frontispiece to the volume is not as might be expected one of the familiar portraits of Schönberg, but a reproduction of the cover of *Der blaue Reiter*, the expressionist manifesto, which was published in 1912 under the direction of Kandinsky and Franz Marc, and which brought together contributions from many of the movement's most fervent supporters. That Schönberg identified himself with these ideas is quite clear from the fact that he himself contributed an important paper to *Der blaue Reiter* on the relationship between words and music.⁴

Schönberg's identification of himself with the expressionist movement is also apparent from the series of works written by him between the years 1908 and 1912, the year of *Pierrot Lunaire*, as well as from the works of his disciples written at this time. All these works give a practical illustration to the aesthetic philosophy set forth in more theoretical terms in *Der blaue Reiter*.

At the centre of this aesthetic was the concept of the *Ur-schrei*; a passionate belief in the absolute significance of the fundamental, subjective conception of a work of art without reference to formal, objective considerations. The essence of this basic doctrine is given with the utmost clarity in two passages quoted by Signor Rognoni from essays appearing in *Der blaue Reiter*. Thomas von Hartmann in his essay "On Anarchy in Music" states quite categorically the "external laws have no existence", it is only the initial, subjective impulse that has any real artistic validity. "The essence of beauty in a work of art lies in the correspondence of the expressive means with the subjective necessity."

In describing the creative process in his essay "On the Question of Form" Wassily Kandinsky differentiates between the "external condition" and the "internal condition" necessary for the creation of a work of art. In the true artist the natural creative spirit will discover, consciously or unconsciously, the precise means of expression (*i.e.* the external condition) for the inner creative urge (the internal condition). However, it must be emphasized that this "external condition" has no relationship with any objective or pre-existent formal principles, with any traditional concepts of harmonic, melodic or formal procedure.

Although it has to be admitted that such an aesthetic could find some support throughout the history of art, it acquired at this time a particular relevance as a result of the growing interest in psycho-analysis which followed the publication in 1900 of Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

It is against the background of this artistic creed that Signor Rognoni goes on to discuss the work of Schönberg, and it is in Schönberg's acceptance of these principles that he sees the ultimate necessity for that new orientation which was to lead to the formulation of the twelve-note method. After the

⁴ Reprinted in the volume, *Style and Idea* (1951).

composition of *Pierrot Lunaire* Schönberg realized that music could go no further along this road, for the extreme subjectivity that he and his associates had achieved in their work could only be balanced by extreme brevity. If music was again to sustain any large scale plan it could only do so if supported by some clear dialectic. Two courses were open, to make a return to the past, or to continue a line of development of which the basic essentials were already present in the music of the Viennese composers. It was this latter road that Schönberg chose to follow.

The remaining chapters of the book discuss the later music of Schönberg as well as that of Berg and Webern, and include an unusually sensitive analysis of the stage works of Berg. Valuable appendices not only give detailed bibliographical information but bring together selected writings of Schönberg and Berg in an Italian translation. Of great interest here is an article of Kandinsky, reprinted from a volume compiled in Schönberg's honour in 1912, in which he makes a critical assessment of Schönberg as a visual artist.

Both in the introduction to his book and throughout its various sections Signor Rognoni makes frequent reference to those composers who followed paths other than that chosen by Schönberg. Stravinsky, Hindemith, Kurt Weill, Richard Strauss and others receive the attention of the author. However, perhaps reflecting that state of sharply divided loyalties which continues to exist in Italy among those actively concerned with the problems of contemporary music, Signor Rognoni has little if any sympathy with those composers who refused to follow Schönberg's lead. The "neo-classicism" of Stravinsky, the "*Gebrauchsmusik*" of Hindemith, the "anti-music" of Kurt Weill are all dismissed as in no way reaching an adequate solution to the problems which faced the post-Wagnerian composer. Signor Rognoni is in fact a fervent advocate of the work of Schönberg and the Viennese composers and his book presents perhaps the most important study of these composers that has yet appeared.

Whereas this volume is written from an unashamedly partisan viewpoint, yet another distinguished Italian commentator on the contemporary musical scene, Roman Vlad, in an essay "Convergences" sees in the work of Stravinsky and Petrassi a synthesis of the various tendencies in contemporary music. The essay, which was first published in 1954, has recently been reprinted in a volume of Mr. Vlad's collected essays, *Modernità e Tradizione nella Musica Contemporanea*.⁵ It is perhaps unnecessary to add that the conclusion drawn in this essay from a study of the Cantata and Septet of Stravinsky and the third Concerto for orchestra of Petrassi has been fully justified by the tendencies displayed in the two most recent works of Stravinsky, *Canticum Sacrum* and the ballet, *Agon*.

The theme which holds together the various essays is expressed in the title to the volume as a whole, and receives its fullest expression in the first article "The Continuity of Tradition". Again and again throughout the essays Mr. Vlad draws the attention of his reader to the many links that exist between the

⁵ Roman Vlad: *Modernità e Tradizione nella Musica Contemporanea*, Einaudi (Turin, 1955).

music of our own time and that of the past: "The whole evolution of the formal corpus of our music, from the time when the inventors of medieval organum gave the initial impulse to polyphony, up to the moment when Schönberg put into practice the serial organization of pan-chromatic space, appears in retrospect as a necessary and inevitable chain of innovation and enrichment". Even the most cursory glance at some of the titles of the various essays makes quite clear the intentions of the author, "Return to Bach", "Rossini and the Modern Composer", "Anticipations in the Harmonic Language of Verdi".

However, the actual ground covered in the volume is much more extensive than might be imagined from these suggestions. In fact Mr. Vlad allows his sympathies to range freely over the whole field of contemporary music. In addition to much needed comment on modern Italian music there are here thoughtful and carefully reasoned, even if at times somewhat obscure, articles on aesthetics and the philosophy of contemporary music as well as some harsh words directed towards the post-war generation of "*avant-garde*" composers. The volume is brought to a close with several articles on music in the film, the possibility of a film-opera, and the possible uses of the film in the musical education of the young.

These two books complement one another to a certain degree, and both individually and collectively form an important and substantial addition to the literature of music in the twentieth century.

The Predicament of musical Aesthetics

BY

PETER J. PIRIE

The Observer of Sunday, 15th August, 1957, carries a "Profile" of Professor A. J. Ayer, the originator of Logical Positivism. No great matter for musicians, perhaps? Yet I would suggest that we must take cognizance of the facts emphasized by this brief incursion of a highly professional subject among the lay readers of a Sunday newspaper. The ever increasing influence of a purely scientific outlook has revolutionized philosophical thought, and this has in turn had its inevitable effect upon aesthetics. The appearance of this profile suggests that this very subtle and complex subject will soon penetrate even those circles where philosophical questions are not usually discussed with any profound understanding, if at all, and the attitude of the most advanced philosophical thought to the subject of aesthetics is of a kind to make the musician take stock of his critical standards and review with distinct unease the assumptions of creative art. They have shown distinct evidence of the influence of the new philosophical temper for some time now, and the very foundations of our art are in the melting pot. I propose to ask a number of very disturbing questions, and not to answer them; I believe that anyone who can give a quick answer to these questions is dishonest, and he who says there is no problem is probably a fool.

So complex is the question before us that I have the greatest difficulty in approaching it. To emphasize any one aspect—and it is inevitable that one has to start somewhere, and thus throw undue emphasis on one small point—is to distort the whole problem out of truth, and any other method than that of starting to write at all angles at once—or rather, on a front that is at once comprehensive and written in depth, must be misleading to the extent that it falls short of these requirements; which are, of course, impossible. So I propose to begin by discussing something perfectly familiar to all my readers, since they will be in possession of all the facts to begin with, and will thus think in terms of a complete complex rather than an arbitrarily selected thread of *data*.

We are familiar with the fact that in the eighteenth century there was a generally understood musical technique; we are losing sight of the extent to which any digression from its syntax was unthinkable. This technique was based on the interaction between tonality and the resolution of dissonance, and the regular metrical system based on the four-bar phrase was the factor that provided the necessary separation of the elements, formal and harmonic (which also interlock) in time. Today, the resolution of a discord is a rare special effect, and the incursions of total chromaticism have well nigh eliminated the tonal centre from music, while the rhythmic element has become either so

complex or so tenuous (or both) as to provide serious difficulties of comprehension in the single performance that (alas) is often all that the more interesting contemporary works achieve in this country. Further, because of the abandonment of the relationship of the discord with its resolution, and indeed, of the principle of progression as such in some types of music, the relationship of harmony (tension) with rhythm (its progression in time) has largely vanished. In fact, if one passes rapidly, and without noticing the intervening development, from Mozart to Schönberg's first twelve-tone period (*opus* 23 and *opus* 24) one can be forgiven for the assumption that the later composer has carefully and mechanically reversed the almost sacred artistic canons of the earlier. Then, if we pass on to Boulez, we are confronted with music that its composer declares is devoid of melody, harmony, counterpoint and rhythm. (I am quite sure that the second "Construction" is in A minor, and Schönberg, it will be remembered, came to recognize the impossibility of writing "atonal" music.) All this is perfectly familiar of course; a dead battle.

What, then, are our *criteria* of judgment? How can we define a good composition? For these technical considerations, of course, have no meaning without the actual sound of the music produced by the methods. Mozart would have held that it was essential to avoid certain effects and progressions if ugliness was to be avoided. These effects and progressions are piled one on top of another in any work of Schönberg, and we shall only make ourselves ridiculous if we call the result "ugly". In fact, such words as "ugly" and "beautiful" have very largely disappeared from the critic's vocabulary, after how many centuries of use. We are no longer confident that we know what they mean. Of course, we have progressed since Mozart's time; and I would agree with that judgment, even though it begs a dozen questions as to the meaning of "progress". Mozart would have been horrified by Bartók's fifth Quartet, which both I, and the conservative musician, and even the died-in-the-wool Schönbergian (fast becoming the twentieth century's most intransigent type of conservative) have now accepted as a masterpiece. It seems likely then, that Hans Keller (in a recent radio talk) was at fault in regarding Stockhausen's *Kontra-punkte* as a work that God, Keller, and probably its composer was incapable of understanding? (Coming from this source, the testimony was impressive.) Yes, logically Mr. Keller was mistaken; if we accept the principle of unending technical development (and it is one of the main planks of the argument for Schönberg), then even Boulez, who is less comprehensible than Stockhausen, is but a milestone in music, a further specimen of which may be seen a little further along the road in the shape of the music of unstable valves, electronic composition. (One of the oddest and most dubious compliments ever paid to Schönberg is the fact that these "white-noise" pieces use "serial technique"—or do they?) But we are only at the beginning of musical development—"oh, for the good old melodious days of Strauss and Debussy", as *Punch* said in 1910—and what lies ahead, say in a hundred years time? What technique will be employed then? At the moment one might guess electronic techniques, but this is like the contemporary of J. S. Bach predicting an eternity of the *galant*. The next

development lasts no longer than the last one did, and there is evidence that the process of change is speeding up. Are these various techniques the soul of music? When we have defined technique (if we can define technique) have we defined music? Gregorian chant, Polyphony, Rameau's harmonic system, *Tristan*, *Pierrot Lunaire*, *Scambi*—is it possible to use one single technical yardstick to define their merit? On the other hand, does excellence consist in the greatest complexity and the highest technical mastery of the *media* of music? Is Holbrooke's *Apollo and the Seaman* a masterpiece dwarfing Beethoven's *Opus 131*, and the music of Messiaen greater than that of Mozart? Yet it is assumed very largely by twentieth-century musicians that music is, at root, just its *media*. But in view of the above, who shall say what is technique? Let me go into further detail. If the *Tristan* progression would have horrified Mozart, what would have been his reaction to Webern's piano Variations, or Schönberg's *Opus 11*, no. 3? It is possible he would have recognized the spare and economical writing in the Webern, and have seen that the theme's second part is an inversion of its first, and also that he would have felt that Schönberg was trying to express something; and I would hazard that, because of its greater textural complexity and lack of contrapuntal device, the Schönberg would have impressed him as a hoax, while he would have suspected some sort of musical intention in the Webern. One can feel fairly certain that he would have regarded neither as music (he was shocked by Beethoven's early C minor Trio) and would have denied the possibility of criticising them by current technical standards.

Now, a simple succession of chords, as in Book 1 no. 1 Prelude of the "48", can be a masterpiece; so can an obviously crude score like that of Moussorgsky's *Boris*, just as well as a "flawless" work by Mozart. But are some of those early Mozart divertimenti, for all their flawless technique, "masterpieces"?

What is technique? Is it the manipulation of certain recognized restrictions to the end of certain accepted effects? Obviously no, since the restrictions have varied from age to age, and today the imposition of pattern is considered a more valid restriction than the effect of harmony on the ear. There is a limited connection between Mozart and Schönberg, the two can be seen to be connected by a continuous musical development. Does a similar link exist between Palestrina and Boulez? What is it? What elements are the same in Gregorian Chant and the music of Stockhausen? Where is the connecting link between Schönberg's fourth Quartet (that liberal masterpiece) and Pierre Henry's *The Veil of Orpheus*? Pitch? No. Instruments? No. "*Musique Concrète*" is not music, then? Let us remember the remark made of Beethoven's *Opus 59*: "You surely do not consider these works to be music?" and beware.

Music is not technique. Even if we employ what may be called historical criticism, and judge each work by the style of its day, we shall not get much further, for there are many impeccably stylistic works that are not good music, while the ultimate end of the historical criticism idea, especially as far as the twentieth century is concerned, is to judge each work separately, by its own technical standards, which is to say, in the first place, not by technical standards

at all, and in the second without a frame of reference, which invalidates any criticism. We cannot say "this work is ugly" without implying "this work is uglier than that", or "there is an abstract idea of beauty, independent of any created work, to which all created work can be compared". What this ideal beauty consists of has never been divulged, and it must be a strange thing if both Mozart's forty-first Symphony and Berg's *Lulu* or Stockhausen's *Kontra-punkte* are beautiful. Since no-one has experienced it no-one can use it as a touchstone. There remains the possibility of there being an inner tension of formal compounds that by their sheer cohesion make a work of art. Cecil Gray was a great master of English, and a penetrating and sensitive critic, but what little I know of his music persuades me that he was no great shakes as a composer. He wrote a work, on a huge scale, called *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, which, although I have not heard it, promises to be another of those awful attempts to write a super cosmic masterpiece, that stuns by sheer dimension and complexity, with which the dustbins of history are stuffed, and like them is probably excruciatingly bad. Its vast structure is, if we can rely upon its composer's lucid description, the largest organic form in existence, constructed from one small "row" of a few notes, with no other material. It ought to be a masterpiece if the *criteria* of the "organic form" critics are valid. Is it? On the other hand, Delius' *Sea Drift* is in no discoverable form, and is compound, at least on paper, of the usual ineptitudes out of which Delius works his magic. For the present writer it is an overwhelming artistic experience, and I believe it is generally regarded as a good work. Why does it appeal at all? Delius said that to him music was the expression of emotion, and nothing else at all. Now, I take it that it would be difficult to prove that Delius, in writing *Sea Drift* as the expression of emotion perpetrated an unconscious technical masterpiece in spite of himself. Apart from its title, lyric, and alleged emotional content, *Sea Drift* is clumsy to a degree. Can we say, however, that it is a masterly example of the bending of technical resource to the end of expressing emotion?

Now, you may not have noticed it, dear reader, but the fat is on the fire indeed, and Professor Ayer has just fainted. It is impossible to prove any one of the clauses above. This article is partly about why. The expression of emotion; what artistic criterion is that? Was the bloodthirsty yell Professor Ayer emitted as soon as he recovered from his faint an artistic masterpiece? It was a most fervent expression of emotion. Shall we say that the expression of emotion through great technical accomplishment is excellence in music? Great emotion is expressed by *The Temptation of St. Anthony* and many another abysmal technical triumph. Suppose we add beauty? What is beauty? And back we are where we started. Are all standards of artistic judgment arbitrary and therefore invalid? Or can we say that although there is no emotion in a work, it induces emotion in the hearer? So does quite a variety of chemicals, as Aldous Huxley, among others, has demonstrated. While raw alcohol was pounding the brain of Dylan Thomas to pieces he saw geometrical patterns of great complexity and beauty; and, oddly enough, they filled him with fear and horror. A great musician listening to Beethoven's *opus* 131 and

a dim-wit overhearing *Hearts and Flowers* are probably experiencing the same emotion. But worse is to come. It is not possible to prove that they are experiencing anything significant at all; it is not possible to prove that the music, and not their preconceived ideas about the music (what they have been told to feel) is responsible for what they may, or may not, be feeling. It is quite impossible to prove that Beethoven's last quartets are of greater artistic value than Rock n' Roll. I know a fine scientist who is convinced that they are not; Rock n' Roll, says he, fulfils a certain social function; Beethoven's last quartets, which appeal to an extreme minority, are actually anti-social, since they encourage a snobbish clique and are otherwise useless. He can only be proved wrong if we can put forward a reason for believing that the last quartets contain some value great enough to override his objections. Now, can we prove this by technique? Or emotion? Or some obscure instinct to be dubbed "Aesthetic"? Is the aesthetic instinct independent of, or partly dependent on, technique and emotion? What of the above arguments, that seem to prove that technique and emotion combined are not provable as a criterion of value? What do we mean by value? Something the subject values? I have never known a musician value a masterpiece as a certain small boy of my acquaintance valued "Davy Crockett".

Here logical positivism steps in. It is held by analytic philosophers and I suppose a majority of modern philosophical thought that value concepts are meaningless. It is impossible to prove a work a masterpiece, as I have demonstrated; if we are an accumulation of *stimuli*, plus memory, with no "I" to experience, the *criteria* of aesthetics have no meaning anyway; meaning, ultimately, is imposed by the brain in an entirely arbitrary fashion, and has no existence in reality.

Very well, in view of the above, am I not entitled to put forward a student's first harmony exercise, which, as all musicians know, does not even consist of "interesting" discords or odd progressions, but merely characterless assonance as a masterpiece before which *The Marriage of Figaro* and the "Mass in D" wilt into insignificance? If indeed the aesthetic terms used above have any meaning at all.

Here we are, and Hans Keller is puzzled by Stockhausen's *Kontra-punkte*. Why are we wasting our time over the appalling discipline of music? Bring on the dancing-girls, roll out the barrel . . . ah, but what *criteria*? It would be a pity if we did not know why we enjoyed them. (I don't. I prefer my girls still and my fruit-juice unfermented.) Here Professor Ayer, or rather Professor Huxley, has a ready answer. We enjoy these things because those who do not neither propagate their kind nor even survive themselves. We only came to have a taste for "music" as a development of the mating-call; itself quite unaesthetic, the aesthetics being arbitrary and meaningless; any sex-noise will do. This is, of course, what my scientist meant by saying that jazz fulfils a social function and the last quartets do not. But what did all this music mean to its creators? Take the last quartets for instance. Apart from being music, it is generally agreed that the last quartets were intended by Beethoven as a lonely dialogue between himself and his God.

Now, this is a concept no modern philosopher would accept; God is an unnecessary hypothesis. If this is so, then we may add to the anti-social functions of the last quartets the fairly serious one of propagating a lie. Several things obtrude here. If music is incapable of expressing anything, and is merely arbitrary noises, then Beethoven is mistaken; the last quartets express nothing. But does it all matter? If values are unreal, is not a lie as good as the truth?

You see where we are. Music has no meaning, no technique, no one set of sounds is more valuable than another, we are playing a meaningless game with nothing barred.

Does music exist? Is it a valid concept at all? What are the *criteria* that distinguish it from other kinds of sound? What, in view of such typical twentieth-century philosophies as logical positivism, dialectical materialism, and existentialism, which all deny the objective existence of value concepts, and generally accept, more or less, the assumption that the human person is merely the sum total of his *stimuli*—a receiving-ground for impressions, not a thing that experiences—do we mean when we say that “we” “enjoy” a piece of “music”? Is it possible, in view of the above, that music is no more than a quite arbitrary set of sounds, and that the experience of music is just our simulated approval of something we have been told to approve? (“Beauty is what we are used to”—Arnold Schönberg.) If this is the case, can we therefore induce ourselves to enjoy as “the highest art” (Professor Ayer is indifferent to all the higher flights of art and has none of any of the varieties of religious experience, according to *The Observer*) any sounds we choose? Screams of agony and the tearing of metal, as in a car crash, for instance?

Conscious art must rest upon certain assumptions; it is acknowledged by all men that the assumptions on which a work rests will condition the nature of that work. What will be the effect on the art of music if the assumptions outlined above gain general acceptance? What should be the *criteria* used by a critic for the assessment of a work in view of the above? Can we say with H. G. Wells that art is a phase mankind will abandon as maturity is reached? What will men do then, work on scientific research while glancing at intervals out of the window at a street built without any aesthetic judgments or assumptions at all? (This would appear to be already with us.) What of the art of the past? Are we to judge it by the falsity of the assumptions on which it is based? Supposing that, in spite of the general acceptance of the invalid nature of artistic assumptions and *criteria* of value, it is decided to “praise in spite of” to quote the Existentialists, and continue to practice the art of music, even if it is “absurd”, what sort of music will be the result? To take one loophole, and accept the generally acknowledged fact that harmonic tension can be objectively measured, will harmonic tension continue to increase, as it has been increasing under the impact of the tentative beginnings of these ideas? Is there any limit to the extent to which tension can increase? Are we to value a work by its degree of tension? (Dr. Adorno would appear to use *criteria* similar to this.)

“The nothing nothings” say the Existentialists, thus animating the Void, and projecting upon the universe their own fears, a novel and disquieting

version of the Pathetic Fallacy. The Void—it is an expression familiar to Zen, in a specialized context, and it is comforting to find a human footstep on the sands of time, to show us that our brothers have been in this predicament before us, and seized it and fecundated it. I will leave it with this concept known to how few, that no easy solution may present itself. If this thing is thought out to its end, we shall either join Dr. Ayer over—the football pools?—permutations should appeal to him—or accept the Void, with that appalling task before us, but thankful to see everything once more in the Dew of Eden, in “the rapture and poignance of first experience”—a task no less terrible than that of living in a world without value concepts, and one that few can attempt. The problem remains.

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The New in Review

BY

HANS KELLER

TIBOR VARGA, the 36-year-old Flesch pupil who plays all the contemporary masterpieces of whose mere existence his virtuoso colleagues are unaware, appeared in an ICA recital at the Wigmore Hall on 18th March, with Alexander von Bremen at the piano; they were joined by Sidney Fell in Berg's own arrangement, for violin, clarinet and piano, of the chamber Concerto's second movement. In Schönberg's Phantasy, op. 47 (1949) and Seiber's Concert Piece (1953-54), Varga's performance, though better than none, was distinctly below this outstanding musician's best. In general, however, his playing shows only one serious fault—too broad a vibrato. The effect on his intonation is serious. Not that he plays out of tune: the right pitch is always in the centre of vibration. But the listening ear has to extricate it, as it were, and the finer shades of what could be constructive intonation are completely lost. If one could convince Varga of the need for improvement (which is all the more urgent in view of his supreme artistic and technical standard), he might still be able to do something about it.

The Seiber is a minor, the Schönberg a major masterpiece (needless to add, the newspapers got it roughly the other way round). Both are serial virtuoso music. In fact, in order to make sure that the violin part would retain its soloistic role throughout, Schönberg adopted the quite exceptional procedure of first writing out the music for the violin, and only afterwards adding the piano part.

Structurally, the Phantasy offers Schönberg's last solution to the problem of rolling several movements into one—a lifelong preoccupation. As distinct from the texture, the form is indeed difficult, though it becomes absolutely clear once one gets to know it. The anonymous Joan Chissell wrote in *The Times* for 20th March that the Phantasy "posed formidable problems for both listener and performer". Insuperable problems for her, I should say, since she arrived in the middle of the ten-minute piece. But then, perhaps she was merely mis-paraphrasing my programme note.

ERIKA MORINI (b. 1906), another interesting violinist and in fact one of the few female violin virtuosos, has for some odd reason dropped out of the picture—or our own provincial picture anyway. Where is she? I last heard her as a boy in Vienna, where she out-played the great Huberman in the Bach double Concerto, not of course because she was better, but because females have a way of doing so when musically coupled with males: the union hardly ever works. But I should like to renew her solo acquaintance. From the United States Information Service I gather that she toured Europe and Israel last December. Her next European tour ought to include this country.

THE FINAL CONCERT OF THE FESTIVAL OF COMMONWEALTH YOUTH, 1958 (Over-seas League Music Circle, 27th March) was, even before it started, a victory for the sex which, artistically, is still in a state of emancipation: not a single boy got into the finals, so that the whole programme turned out to be a strictly feminine affair. Malcolm Arnold adjudicated with great competence and gave the Commonwealth Award, 1958, to the superbly gifted and accomplished Jamaican pianist Audrey Cooper (b. 1936), who played Bloch's three *Poems of the Sea*, "Waves", "Chanty", and "At Sea", with natural freedom of declamation, with an instinctive understanding of structural meaning and its agogical implications—in fact, with such imaginative, constructive empathy that these pieces changed into good music for the duration of the performance. Unless something altogether unforehearable intervenes, the future will hear a great deal of Miss Cooper, who incidentally started her career at eight and had her first broadcast at eleven: whatever the intellectualists may think, virtually all great virtuosos start out as child prodigies, though of course not all child prodigies grow into virtuosos.

The anonymous second prize went to one of the two representatives of Great Britain, Vienna-born (1937) Dori Furth, a cellist who, potentially, is easily in a class with Miss Cooper, and whose profound musicality, strong individuality, and pronounced instrumental gifts seem to place everything musically desirable at her disposal: she only has to go and get it, and on the way break down one or two not very serious emotional barriers. (Jamaica *versus* Europe: the purely psychological difference did not seem a matter of chance.) Miss Furth played Faure's *Élégie* and a virtuosic *allegro vivo* (virtually all thumb position) from an E major Sonata by François Francœur. Since there are two composers of the name, the programme ought to have given the Christian name. François Francœur, a violinist like his nephew Louis Joseph, must have been obsessed by the thumb: in his violin works he sometimes employed it too, for taking the bass note of a chord. Most unorthodox even at the time, the device was bound to have no future, since the position and technique of the left hand developed in the opposite direction, so that it would have become a major operation to get the thumb round on to the finger-board. But one sympathizes with such unprejudiced innovations, some of which turn out to be of great historical import; we remember Spohr's long neck and its probable significance for the future of violin technique—*via* the innovation of the chin-rest.

As for Miss Furth, since she has sought my advice on a number of occasions, I hesitated for quite some time before deciding to write about her, inhibited as I felt by critical ethics and etiquette, but my final conclusion was that what mattered most was the truth, and the truth is a very rare talent indeed.

For the rest, it is a pity that Malcolm Arnold himself could not get a prize for his exceptionally realistic critical attitude. True, his choice for the consolation prize was disputable—Australia's 21-year-old Mary Nemet, no doubt a promising fiddler who, however, is still highly immature emotionally; her style (if any) abounds with conventionalities. But Arnold's reminder to the audience that Miss Nemet's recovery after a serious lapse in the Wieniawski *Scherzo Tarantelle* was more admirable than a spotless rendering of the passage could possibly have been, immediately made him into an honorary professor at my imaginary Royal Academy of Music Criticism.

SCHÖNBERG'S FINAL *OPUS* NUMBERS are, as readers of "*Schönberg—II*" in our last August issue will remember, in a mess. Mr. O. W. Neighbour has drawn my attention to the fact that my own description of the state of affairs is in need of amendment. I gave it as an apodeictic fact that *Dreimal tausend Jahre* for mixed *a cappella* chorus (20th April, 1949) was op. 50A, even though the original publication in the Swedish journal *Prisma* bears the *opus* number 49B—an all the more thoughtless omission since I possess this publication and did in fact discuss the problem with Mr. Neighbour a year or two previously. Luckily, however, my slip seems to prove of no more than academic interest. I have written to Josef Rufer, the author of the forthcoming Schönberg "*Köchel*", who has now kindly supplied me with the latest information. There is authentic proof that the above-mentioned *Phantasy* (1949) is op. 47, that the three Songs for low voice (1933) are op. 48, and that *De profundis* (a six-part *a cappella* setting, sung and spoken, of the original Hebrew version of the 130th Psalm, completed on 2nd July, 1950) is op. 50B. Rufer also proposes to list *Dreimal tausend Jahre* as op. 50A, as I did in the August MR, and the three Folksongs for mixed *a cappella* chorus (1948) as op. 49, although they were published without *opus* number in 1949 (The Arthur Jordan Conservatory of Music Choral Series, General Editor Lloyd F. Sunderman, Nos. 17–19, Edward Marks Music Corporation, New York). He is not yet in possession of absolutely conclusive evidence of the authenticity of these two *opus* numbers; the question will still be discussed with Schönberg's widow and R. Hoffmann. But in view of the established authenticity of op. 50B, the renumbering of *Dreimal tausend Jahre* (50A instead of 49B) is most probably Schönberg's own, and op. 49 would thus likewise fall into place. This latter *opus* number, incidentally, already appears in Rufer's *Die Komposition mit zwölf Tönen*, Berlin, 1952 (*Composition with twelve notes related only to one another* (trans. Humphrey Searle), London, 1954). The unfinished Psalm—Schönberg's last music (see the above-cited August MR)

—on the other hand, which is listed as op. 50C in Rufer's book but does not bear an *opus* number in Rudolf Kolisch's edition of the work, will appear under "Unfinished Works without Opus Number" in Rufer's forthcoming bibliography. The end of the muddle seems in sight.

IAIN HAMILTON AS CRITIC illustrates the supreme problem of the age, which is not the other group's or man's aggressiveness, but one's own: how to face it and utilize it as realistically as possible. His critical excursions seem to be so many incidents of civilized yet uncontrolled aggression. He introduced Schönberg's *Glückliche Hand* to this country by way of attacking the text which, so far as his understanding of it was concerned, might just as well have been in Chinese, and his *Listener* article on Webern (27th February) informs us that the composer, "like Stravinsky, preserves and re-manifests the true unsentimental and aristocratic musical thought which was the glory of all great music until 1830 and the glory of very little since, a few exceptions though there may be in the later 19th century". Mr. Hamilton reacts against romanticism in a manner as controlled as a conditioned reflex, and thus qualifies as a critic *κατ' ἐξοχήν*: he criticizes eras rather than works, styles rather than ideas. This, from a responsible composer, is disgraceful. He ought to be voted into the Critics' Circle without delay.

PETER STADLEN'S "SERIALISM RECONSIDERED" (*The Score*, February, 1958), the most embarrassing revelation of "expert" ignorance in public print, submits to the same conditioned reflex—conditioned, that is, by our higher-brow *Zeitgeist*—with a degree of mental paralysis that lends it unexpected entertainment value: "The sharp falling off in quality of anything later than Beethoven and Schubert (on which surely all men of good will agree on reflexion) may simply be explained by the running down of the finite number of significant possibilities tonality can yield". It is the "good will" which is the best joke of the season. Goodwill towards whom? Towards all the composers later than Beethoven and Schubert whom our would-be critical *imperator* would wipe off the musical map? I wish somebody could force Mr. Stadlen to explain. Cornered, he would have to admit that the only possible object of his proposed mass meeting's kindly feelings is he himself.

BRUCKNER would have fainted had he been told that his picture would one day adorn Austria's thousand shilling banknotes. It is a laudable gesture: there were plenty of composers to choose from, but few for whom the honour would not have been tautological.

HANS PFITZNER, another so-miscalled post-Wagnerian, has just had a street in Salzburg named after him: again a most welcome acknowledgment of a neglected operatic—if a mediocre instrumental—composer, all the more unexpected since he was not an Austrian, though he did die in Salzburg nine years ago this month.

THE RECORD SOCIETY'S latest pamphlet, circulated with diverse serious journals, is asking for it. A new LP of Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* in E♭, K.364, is thus recommended: "One of Mozart's finest works; a supreme combination of the symphonic form with that of the Concerto". The copy writer is herewith requested to say what he means, for he expects the poor musical music lover to find out. In what way is the form of K.364 more "symphonic" than that of, say, any piano concerto from K.271 onwards? Less so than most, in fact. This kind of irresponsible, literally thoughtless paraphrase on a—nowadays—misleading title is far more harmful than a correct description would be useful. It contributes to the inferiority feelings current among musical non-musicians, who erroneously conclude that they "don't know anything about music". Which reminds me:—

THE DODECAPHONEYS' ADMIRERS complain that we musicians don't know anything about the "*avant garde*" music we reject. We, on the contrary, may justly complain that their music doesn't know anything about us. This is the decisive difference between their music and music, no matter whether the latter is Mozart's or Schönberg's; here, too,

lies the criterion of psychotic art. (Neurotic art merely doesn't get "out what is in", to use Schönberg's English.)

ERNEST NEWMAN, GERALD ABRAHAM, and other, less distinguished colleagues would of course maintain that by now Schönberg's communication can be shown to have failed, in that the situation is not substantially different from what it was thirty years ago. But is that true? Between 1928 and 1948, for instance, the Variations for orchestra, op. 31, received twelve performances. Between 1949 and 1957 they received eighty-eight performances.

THIS YEAR'S HOLLAND FESTIVAL is going to be of outstanding interest. I don't think that I have ever given advance publicity to any festival, but the Schönberg double bill is something which every musician in every part of the world who can afford to do so should make an effort to attend. Under Hans Rosbaud, the successful first conductor of *Moses and Aron*, a stage (!) production of *Erwartung* will be linked with one of *Von heute auf morgen* (1929) which is unknown to almost all of us and has only been published in a private edition ("*im Selbstverlag des Komponisten*", Berlin, 1930, distribution by Edition Benno Balan). Helga Pilarczyk is the only singer so far known, and the orchestra will be The Hague Residentie. The dates on the advance list to hand are 23rd June and 12th July for Amsterdam (Municipal Theatre), 21st June and 13th July for The Hague (Gebouw K W). Almost within a year, then, three of Schönberg's four operas have found a place in general European Festivals (for though the first production of *Moses and Aron* was planned in conjunction with the last I.S.C.M. Festival, it would in any case have taken place within the framework of the Zürich Festival), while the fourth, *Die glückliche Hand*, has also been heard both on the Continent and in this country within the same period, even though it remains to be *seen* for most of us. Meanwhile, musicologists and critics ought to ponder these facts in connection with the preceding paragraph. (The full programme of the Holland Festival has meanwhile come to hand. The singers in the Schönberg operas will be Magda Laszlo, Helga Pilarczyk, Erika Schmidt, Derrick Olsen, and Herbert Schachtschneider. As if to lend further weight to the present paragraph's concluding sentence, the programme also lists two performances, by the Concertgebouw Orchestra under Hans Rosbaud, of Schönberg's Variations for orchestra, as well as the American Ballet Theatre's production of the Tudor ballet *Pillar of Fire*, which is based on *Verklärte Nacht*. A veritable Schönberg festival, then, within the framework of a popular international festival!)

POULENC'S *LES DIALOGUES DES CARMELITES* (1953-55) received its absolutely inexcusable first English performance, in English, at Covent Garden on 16th January, conducted by Rafael Kubelik and produced by Margherita Wallmann. All in all, there are about twelve minutes of music in this start- and endless effort, the first bit, splendidly isolated at the outset of David Drew's "The Simplicity of Poulenc" (*The Listener*, 16th January), emerging towards the end of the first scene: "Dear father, there is nothing so small or unimportant that does not bear the signature of God". Before I heard the opera I should have been inclined to agree with this proposition, but now it seems to me that there are things which are written and signed in God's absence by a well-meaning but irresponsible secretary, allegedly *per procuracionem*. When the Day of Judgment comes, it won't be us humans who will be the children of wrath; it will be those secretaries. Meanwhile, with Arthur Benjamin's *Tale of Two Cities* on a related theme still on the waiting list, Covent Garden got away with it without a tittle of musical justification, and don't let's hear about "practical" reasons—easy singability and stageability and so forth. Ernest Newman's famous Symphony of Rests, which needs very little rehearsal, has not yet been performed either. As one who has shown more admiration for Poulenc's good works than most writers on music, I would seem to be in an ethical position to reflect, apropos of this catastrophe, that at no previous stage in our culture have so many excuses so often been found for putting cultural money into rubbish. Tainted culture is worse than none.

BEETHOVEN'S C MINOR QUARTET, which has been occupying my thoughts lately in the course of teaching and coaching, may not seem to fall under our present heading, but the fact is that much about it has remained unsaid. Various considered the first and the last, the weakest (Riemann) and the strongest (A. E. F. Dickinson) of the op. 18 set, it obviously constitutes a problem, and to my mind everybody is right, even from the historical or biographical point of view, if "first" and "last" is not a matter of mere chronology—which, with the protracting Beethoven, is in itself a complicated aspect in all conscience. In brief, the Quartet is at once the most imperfect and the most characteristic—and hence prophetic—of the lot. There is, to be sure, one perfect movement: the scherzo, whose triple counterpoint recapitulation amusingly reminds me of a private remark by one of our chief daily critics, to the effect that Beethoven was pretty weak at counterpoint. No doubt he read that somewhere. Perhaps he would have been a little more cautious if he had known his Tovey, who thus comments on the passage in question: "If our masters of counterpoint have any criteria according to which that is not masterly, their criteria must lie outside anything we want to know about classical music" (*Beethoven*, ed. Hubert J. Foss, London, 1944). What Tovey does not, unfortunately, draw attention to is the contribution to this master-stroke of the lead-back and its ensuing surprise overlap with the reprise, the one strictly determining the other.

Perhaps the weakest single idea is the hammering cadential chords over three strings in the first movement; nothing will make them sound, and I have heard and tried everything. Yet their vulgarity is as it were pre-functional; we have only to imagine them orchestrally in order to fore-hear the kind of Beethovenian "vulgarity" which is no longer open to criticism by anyone except music critics. We must not forget that Beethoven was still mastering the medium; on 1st June, 1801 (or 1800?) he wrote to Karl Ferdinand Amenda about the original version of the F major Quartet, which he had given to him (my translation): "Don't for heaven's sake pass on your quartet; it is only now that I know how to write quartets properly, as you will see when you get them"—i.e. the first batch of op. 18.

Not that I wish to imply that it is only at the weakest spots that you find the strongest anticipations of the future. A profoundly significant fact that seems to have escaped attention altogether is that *all* the themes are *piano* or softer: the first and second subjects of both first movement and scherzo, the themes of the minuet and trio respectively, and the finale's rondo theme, second subject and central episode. Dynamic climaxes are thrown forward towards the end of themes or phrases, and urge the structures into the transitional, developmental and concluding stretches, where the real dynamic culminations ensue. Here already is the real Beethoven: the break-away from largely statement-like into insistently growing, developmental music—if I may simplify a rather more complex historical process. That this immensely characteristic "unfolding" tendency should so clearly manifest itself in what was to become Beethoven's own C minor (corresponding to Mozart's G minor or Haydn's F minor) can hardly be regarded as a matter of chance.

Letter from U.S.A. (Western Section)

BY

EVERETT HELM

OVER ten years have gone by since we had a look around in that part of America known as "The West". Actually this term is rather hard to define, for much depends on who is using it. To the average New Yorker or Bostonian, The West begins practically with the western boundaries of his own state and includes that large and busy region of the Middle

West (Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Minnesota, *etc.*). But to a born Middle-westerner, The West begins with Oklahoma and Texas and extends through Arizona and New Mexico to the Pacific Coast. This includes about half of the entire country, geographically speaking, but only a small portion of the population; for much of it is desert, mountains or relatively unfruitful "wide open spaces".

The exception is the western coastal region, which is one of the fastest-growing parts of the United States. California, the prime example of rapid expansion, and Los Angeles, from where we write, bear the bell for fractious and unfettered increase. In ten years this monster has become infinitely more monstrous, reaching out with its tentacles in all directions of the compass—and upwards (into the hills) as well. Isolated, peaceful villages have become thriving, garish "shopping centres", incorporated in the sprawling mass; secluded canyons have been built up into modern residential "developments". Distances have become almost insurmountable. Although a fabulous system of super-highways, called "freeways", has been constructed, carrying traffic from the heart of Los Angeles in all directions, the increase in the number of automobiles has offset this advantage to such an extent that going anywhere is something of a major undertaking, both in time and in wear and tear on the nerves. Public transportation exists almost exclusively for Los Angeles proper. In many of the surrounding communities, which are legion, it is almost non-existent; everyone has his own car—at least one.

This is not meant to be a travelogue. All this has a direct connection with the musical life of greater Los Angeles, which is as heterogeneous and unorganized, on the whole, as the monster-city itself. The Thing has grown and is still growing too rapidly to have anything resembling homogeneity—let alone a semblance of tradition. The kind of community feeling and community spirit which characterize many other American cities (such as San Francisco) are notably lacking here. It's very much a matter of "every man for himself" in his living habits and in his daily philosophy. And over all falls the grizzly shadow of hypermaterialistic Hollywood, that never-never land, which even in its present deflated condition reckons only in hundreds of thousands of dollars (formerly it was only in millions).

The result is that whatever cultural activity, musical or otherwise, comes into being in greater Los Angeles does so as the result of private initiative, which is generally uncoordinated with what is being done (through private initiative) in other parts of the city (or rather of the conglomeration that looks like a city but doesn't act like one). There is in fact an enormous amount of such activity, much of it accompanied by a high degree of altruism, but a great deal gets lost in the shuffle and wastes its sweetness, literally, on the desert air (Los Angeles is built on what was once a desert).

The two exceptions, in the field of music, to this highly diffuse situation are the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and the annual opera season. The Philharmonic draws its audience and its contributing patrons from all parts of the "city", and some Los Angelans even take a certain pride in it. The short opera season again finds people from Santa Monica (a western suburb) rubbing elbows with people from Azusa (an eastern suburb, some 45 miles distant). Los Angeles has no opera of its own, but for two weeks of the year the San Francisco Opera Company (which is in turn built around guest stars from the Metropolitan Opera in New York) plays in the enormous and highly unsuitable Shrine Auditorium.

Apart from these "big events", the Greater Los Angeles landscape is dotted with a multitude of smaller events, many of them worthy of much more attention than is given them, which go on every day, week-in, week-out. Each of the two large universities has a crowded music programme of its own. The University of California in Los Angeles, generally referred to as U.C.L.A., is located in Westwood, fairly close to the Pacific Ocean; the University of Southern California (U.S.C.) is in Los Angeles proper and serves an entirely different group of communities. U.C.L.A. has a large Music Department operating within a faculty of fine arts, while U.S.C. has a flourishing School of Music, which functions not only as an academic entity, giving courses in all phases of music, but as a conservatory as well.

Each of these universities has a series of orchestral, choral, chamber music and solo concerts, in which faculty members, advanced students and outside celebrities appear. Each has an active opera department, which mounts several productions a year. Contemporary and early music are cultivated in the universities (here and in other parts of America) to a far greater extent than in "commercial" concerts, and the importance of the universities, colleges and music schools cannot be overestimated. They provide a hearing for the works of many composers who have not yet achieved a position in the national scene and give the public a chance to hear non-standard music. The fact that the public does not seem particularly interested in broadening its horizon does not detract from the validity of what the schools are doing.

Besides the two large universities, there are many smaller institutions in and around Los Angeles, which have similar music programmes, albeit on a correspondingly reduced scale. Among them are Occidental College, the University of Redlands, Pomona College and Pepperdine College.

While the Philharmonic is the only major orchestra in Southern California, there are at least five other "community" orchestras in greater Los Angeles alone—not to mention those of San Diego and Santa Barbara (some 130 and 90 miles distant respectively). These "community" orchestras play relatively short seasons and cater to local trade, and their activities are practically unknown outside their own regions. Their artistic programming is apt to be unimaginative, yet the technical level of performance is generally satisfactory.

There is no dearth of "skilled orchestral labour" in the Los Angeles region, for the Hollywood film studios have attracted some of the best players of the entire country. Wages in Hollywood, while less astronomical than formerly, are still high. But the work required of these top *virtuosi* by the film studios has nothing to do with art and often very little with music. Recording film-track has only one attraction—the money involved. It leaves the players hungry for "good" music, and they are by no means averse to playing in a community orchestra for a very modest fee.

It is a curious contradiction in terms that Hollywood, the home of some of the world's most trite and trivial music, should be the scene for recording the complete works of Anton von Webern, which stand at the extreme other end of the musical spectrum. Through the initiative, energy and musical understanding of the strictly non-Hollywood conductor Robert Craft, studio musicians were obtained to record these works for Columbia Records, with remarkable results. The musicians themselves found the task arduous but intriguing and ultimately highly rewarding. As several of the players remarked, nothing that might be thrown at them in the studios could make them turn a hair after the strict discipline of performing Webern.

Robert Craft is also the regular conductor of the Monday Evening Concerts, the most interesting concert series in Greater Los Angeles. In them, anything resembling standard repertoire is rigorously excluded. Contemporary music is performed extensively in juxtaposition with early music and more obscure works by "famous" composers. We attended a delightful concert consisting of harpsichord pieces by Purcell, a Vivaldi concerto for Two Mandolins, a seldom-heard Bach cantata and Tallis' magnificently moving Lamentations. In another, we heard Stockhausen's Piano Pieces, op. 2, Stravinsky's Concertino for 12 Instruments, Schönberg's Piano Pieces, op. 11, Dallapiccola's *Cinque Canti* and the cantata "*Christ lag in Todesbanden*" by J. S. Bach. Leonard Stein deserves special mention for his masterly performance of the Schönberg and Stockhausen works.

Major credit for the continued existence of the Monday Evening Concerts is due to its director Lawrence Morton, who is also a brilliant critic and writer on musical subjects. Morton directs the annual Ojai Festival as well, which takes place each spring in the now-populous Ojai Valley near Los Angeles. While the programmes of this festival are somewhat more popular than those of the Monday Evening Concerts, they nevertheless put many European festivals to shame. In recent years they have included such "plums" as Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, Falla's "*Master Peter's Puppet Show*", a Heinrich Schütz

programme, works by Webern, Berg and Schönberg and many modern compositions by Bartók, Stravinsky, Dallapiccola and Britten.

Also during the summer the famous Hollywood Bowl concerts pack in huge audiences that come to hear the most-standard repertoire played (often poorly) in an open-air bowl with wretched acoustics while sitting most uncomfortably in the chill night air.

Five hundred miles to the north of The Thing lies San Francisco, one of the world's most beautifully situated cities. This city too is growing and expanding by leaps and bounds, but the effects have been less disconcerting and confusing than in Los Angeles. One does not have here the feeling that everything is higgledy-piggledy but rather the impression of orderly and more disciplined growth. Of primary importance is the fact that San Francisco is an older city than Los Angeles. It has already a certain tradition, and this tradition was given a good start by its founders, who were more culturally-minded than those to the south. The cosmopolitan atmosphere of San Francisco has been often remarked, and justly so. Above all, San Francisco is not blighted by any local equivalent of Hollywood. It is a real city, inhabited by real people who believe in real things—among them being culture in its various manifestations.

(Of course we are indulging here in an over-simplification. There are many real, culturally-minded citizens of Los Angeles, just as there are doubtless cultural barbarians in San Francisco. Nevertheless, the generalities here made reflect general impressions and conditions truthfully.)

There may not be more music in San Francisco than in Los Angeles—very probably there is not as much. But there seems to be more because what there is doesn't get lost in the confusion. As in most American cities the centre of musical life is the Symphony Orchestra, which is a very fine one indeed. Since the retirement of Pierre Monteux some years back, it has been conducted by Enrique Jordá, whom we heard give one of the finest and most moving readings of Vaughan Williams' fifth Symphony it has ever been our privilege to hear. The San Francisco Opera Company is in effect a "branch" of the Metropolitan. Although it is an entirely separate and independent organization, it employs many Metropolitan singers for its relatively short season.

In greater San Francisco too the universities and colleges are playing an increasingly important role in the musical life of the community. The University of California in Berkeley has a large and distinguished music department, as does Stanford University in nearby Palo Alto, which has given some notable performances of operas. In one of the smaller schools—San Francisco State College—we heard a thoroughly ingratiating student performance of Vaughan Williams' opera, *Sir John in Love*.

Interestingly enough, San Francisco has a second, entirely indigenous opera company which plays a repertoire of three or four "old chestnuts" each year. We had the misfortune to witness a performance of *Carmen*, which, we were assured, was the poorest of this year's productions. This we would gladly believe, for it was almost, but not quite, as bad as that of the Paris Opéra Comique, which still holds the all-time-low prize. Nevertheless, *Carmen* was doing good business; every seat was taken, and nobody seemed upset by the faulty intonation, ensemble-less-ness or absurd gesturing and staging.

To include Texas as an appendage to this report would be a sin for which Texans, a highly nationalistic folk, would find no punishment too severe. We shall not, therefore, make any attempt to "cover" Texas but will content ourselves with saying that in this state, as in Oklahoma and other Western states that were in recent memory not much more than Indian territory, enormous strides have been made in an incredibly short space of time. Universities have been expanding at a prodigious rate, and with them their departments or schools of music. Texas alone has no less than twelve professional symphony orchestras, of which two are really excellent and several better than average. It need hardly be pointed out that there is a direct connection between this happy situation and the fact that Texas is liberally sprinkled with oil wells.

New Music in Basle

THERE seemed to be nothing extraordinary about the Basle Chamber Orchestra's concert on 14th March: it was the fifth of the winter series conducted by their regular conductor Paul Sacher who enjoys an international reputation. But a glimpse at the programme disclosed that the works to be played were all by living composers. One, moreover, was an "absolute *première*": a piano concerto by a young American composer written for a young American pianist.

The name of the composer David Kraehenbuehl will be unfamiliar to many people, even if the name of the Yale professor David Kraehenbuehl is mentioned with respect in scholarly circles; our interest in his work concerns both the expression of a personal imagination and the quality of the new creative spirit in America.

The information supplied in the programme-note mentions a first draft of the first movement in the form of a piece for piano duet, to accompany a dance scene. This dates from the winter of 1952. He was also considering using its material in a larger work for piano and wind instruments. But, since a large-scale work for piano and orchestra is barely practical, the sketches were laid aside until in 1953 a meeting with the New York Woodwind Ensemble promised possibilities. The Ensemble suggested a concerto, and Kraehenbuehl reverted to the old sketches. The result did not satisfy him however, and he decided to abandon these attempts for good. It was here that Mr. Armin Watkins, one-time student at his faculty, stepped in with a commission for a concerto for piano and orchestra. During the winter of 1953-54 Kraehenbuehl worked again on the old sketches, but on second thoughts decided to drop the original idea of having a wind-band for orchestra; however, he retained several musico-thematic ideas and preserved the original general plan of variations. The score was finished in the summer of 1955.

The work bears the title *Epitaphs Concertant*, and carries allusive titles for each of the four movements. Thus the first is "For a Magician", the second "For a Stranger—For a Madman", the third "For a Hero—For a Coward", and the last, "For a Leader of Men", conceals a satirical portrait of a controversial figure in recent American political history.

Since by definition the rest of the music is determined by the thematic ideas of the first movement, let us examine it in some detail. The theme, two complementary sentences divided by a *caesura* and rounded off by motivic extension, is stated in the weighty opening clause. The melodic line gives the impression of a twelve-note structure, but even if this was designedly so, the further progress of the music does not support the evidence. There are a number of characteristic intervals—the opening fifth, successions of semitones, sixths—promising some interesting melodic development in the subsequent musical argument, while the rhythmic coefficient, resolute and marked as it is, does not seem to have any particular say in the musical events. The orchestration of this passage—the three trumpets in unison for the theme's first sentence, reinforced with horns and trombones and for a moment with the woodwind, and emphasized by the strings at nodal points—appears to be too heavy and too emphatic.

The theme of the first *Allegro* is presented by the solo piano: an ingenious variation of the theme, utilizing its first motif in a figurative enlargement and rhythmic modification which is very appropriate to the piano. The orchestra supplies the complement in the form of another motif from the theme. There are some delightful instrumental *trouvailles* in the orchestral texture as well as in the partwriting for the solo piano. What seems to lie on the debit side is the frequent overemphasis of the orchestral sound, and the tendency to harmonic stagnation. But the rhythmic interest, achieved by cleverly contrived *ostinatos* of subtle cross-rhythms, offers some compensation. Formal symmetry is established by a short reference to the basic theme at the end of the movement. In the second movement's variation a slow melodic version comes first: *siciliano*-like, this is

entrusted to the strings and woodwind, supported with more substantial harmonic perspective. The semiquaver piano passages are merely supplementary to the texture here, but in the second half of the movement the solo instrument assumes the lead with a relentless motoric version of the theme, running in uniform quavers but with an irregular metric pulse. The orchestra's contribution is much more markedly articulated: and the musical argument, in the form of a brilliantly conceived scherzo, proceeds by canonic and fugued passages—but again showing occasional overemphasis in the orchestra. The hushed beginning of the third movement promises well, but if its comparatively short consequent does not quite fulfil expectations, it discloses an entirely new melodic perspective of the theme. The motivic elaboration of the quick part and its inspired orchestral effects constitute a refreshing contrast to its melancholy antecedent: the inspired distribution of the various motivic fragments in the orchestral texture is particularly noteworthy. The last movement appears the least satisfactory. The invention seems by no means lesser than in the previous movements; but here a final summing-up is perhaps expected in which the hidden unity and relationship of the various movements should have been made clear, and their central musical motivation disclosed. The movement however appears fractionalized, containing too many subsections whose relevance tends to escape the uninformed listener.

The general impression derived from the music implies the seminal influence of Hindemith: its motivic patterns and predominantly contrapuntal texture are the qualities which must be ascribed to this inspiration. The personal element is represented by the orchestral treatment which discloses an uncommonly versatile hand and a taste for precision. On the whole Kraehenbuehl's music makes a favourable impression by its symphonic seriousness no less than by its obvious relish for organization of instrumental sound.

The dedicatee, Armin Watkins, who performed the solo part, belongs to the new American generation of virtuoso performers. Mr. Watkins is a *musician* first and an accomplished performer on his chosen instrument second. While we must acknowledge his manual dexterity we are impressed by his understanding of music *qua* music: and it is this understanding, we believe, that makes his fingers move. His insight into the *kind* of music he has to deal with prescribes, as it were, his approach to the technical problems, and the manner of his playing. In *Epitaphs* this was a matter-of-fact, objective execution, on the dry side, and avoiding the emotional appeal. His subjectivism, however, broke through at precisely those passages which seemed *structurally* to require this: where a relaxation appeared from the severe contrapuntal discipline in the music. Despite the frequent surface gaiety and merriment this music took itself seriously; and this fundamental seriousness was transmitted in his manner of playing and tone-production.

Sándor Veress' *Threnos* opened the concert. This shortish work for orchestra was written in memory of Bartók, when the news of his death arrived in a Budapest just beginning to breathe freely after its long dark night. Veress, who belonged to Bartók's professional and personal *entourage*, conceived an emotionally and musically convincing project: the melodic style of the composition is inspired by the Transylvanian laments, a musical folk-custom still alive in Eastern Europe's peasant communities. The melismatic, richly ornamented and rhythmically fairly free style of these mourning songs is reflected, first of all, in the principal idea of the music, and in the motivic fragments derived from it in the course of its development. A single and powerful central climax dominates the formal disposition of the work whose passionate and elegiac accents made a deep impression on the audience.

J. S. W.

The Hallé Centenary 1858-1958

BY

JOHN BOULTON

THIS has been a time of high musical excitement in Manchester and the best season since John Barbirolli took charge of the Hallé Orchestra fifteen years ago. It has also been an occasion for pride and reflection and, as will appear, for hopes and fears.

Thinking backwards over the hundred years of Hallé concerts unfolds a great richness. However the English stand in the sight of other nations—especially those more fortunate in recognizing music as something worth having and therefore worth paying for—the Hallé century alone gives us a place in the artistic traditions of the world's music. Only three orchestras are older: The Gewandhaus, Leipzig, the Vienna Philharmonic, and the New York Philharmonic. The first conductor, Charles Hallé (1858-1895), came to England straight from the *coteries* of Hector Berlioz and Franz Liszt. Not merely did he found an orchestra; he created a home for the music and musicians of his day. Richard Strauss played his own chamber works here with Hallé as well as conducting his new orchestral compositions; Mühlfeld came hot-foot with the clarinet works Brahms had written for him; and in any week of the year new works and world-figures could be heard and seen. Then came Richter (1899-1911) who had performed with, and for, Richard Wagner whilst the ink of *Die Meistersinger* and *The Siegfried Idyll* was literally still wet on the pages; possibly Richter's greatest single contribution was to introduce us—the English—to Edward Elgar, whose first Symphony—a significant landmark in a nation's music if ever there was one—was written for him. Hamilton Harty (1920-1933) put Mahler and the whole of Sibelius before us, buttressed the Berlioz tradition and opened our eyes to the real Brahms: his wit and humanity did as much to train audiences as to drill properly a permanent orchestra. John Barbirolli (1943-1958) left the most lime-lit rostrum in the world and the inheritance of Toscanini to rescue the Hallé Orchestra from war damage and decay, and make it a recognized international instrument. His success in this has been the outstanding phenomenon of the post-war orchestral scene. He himself has grown with the orchestra and the Barbirolli of today is everywhere recognized as a grand master.

Sir John has been hoping for some years now that he and his orchestra might grasp their inheritance; that they should travel as widely as home engagements will allow, that, especially, they should visit the Americas in response to the high compliments of insistent invitations. This they are not going to do: in spite of the fact that the orchestra could earn its keep anywhere in the world, *it is not possible to find the money to guarantee the mere expenses of travelling.*

Sir John Barbirolli has made the only possible decision. If the orchestra cannot travel he will travel alone and, as from the end of this season, his association with the Hallé will be part-time on a fee per concert basis; next year he will reduce his engagements with his orchestra from sixty per cent. of their concerts to twenty-eight per cent. and he will no longer be responsible for planning the music to be played. It will eventually cease to be "his" orchestra, or so it would seem. Do we in Manchester *deserve* our place in the artistic traditions of the world's music? We do not; and we get what we deserve.

Whatever the future may be for Hallé standards, the present season has been maintained at an exceptional level. From a welter of visiting greatness and of fine performances, a brief review can deal with only some occasions. In a Festival season, the temptation to reach the biggest audiences with the best known music is great. This has been met by the celebration of old associations: Hallé's very first programme, Barbirolli's first, Richter's first, and one celebrating Harty as composer and conductor. That same temptation has also been resisted: in the complete season there have been twenty-six

first Hallé performances including four world *premières*, and a great deal of other modern and unusual music.

It has been impossible to attend every one of fifty-four concerts and, at the moment of writing, one or two events are still to come. Outstanding amongst these latter is a performance of Mahler's second Symphony under Barbirolli—the first at these concerts and a rarity anywhere—and the visit of Sir William Walton who is to conduct the cello Concerto and the *Partita* amongst his own works. Earlier in the year the best performance of Walton's Symphony I have ever heard was given under Weldon. The work remains, on hearing, a masterpiece that very nearly isn't, and something of an enigma still.

Of the high number of unusual works performed, the prize must go to Andor Foldes, Barbirolli and the orchestra, for Bartók's second Concerto. Composed in 1931, this work has suffered from a conspiracy of denigration in which have joined even some critics who have been "on the side of" Bartók. This is especially true of those who attribute to Bartók doctrinaire attitudes, largely because they prefer to write about doctrines rather than about music. Whilst on these matters, Stravinsky might be mentioned: unhappily this season has not included any of his later work; but Herman Lindars conducted the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in a sound production of *The Rite of Spring*—the point being that this was the first time ever in Manchester. Young music students were naturally there in droves and from amongst one group I overheard: "I wish they'd play more Stravinsky and write less". Doctrinaire critics:—this is for you from the wise mouths of babes and sucklings. Leave him—and Bartók—alone to find their own audiences, untrammelled by guff. Remember that the great majority of young people cannot get to *hear* these works easily; but they can and do, unhappily, I sometimes think, read about them.

Among world *premières* was Finzi's *The Fall of the Leaf* the almost completely orchestrated score of which was found after his death. (Howard Ferguson prepared it for performance.) This poem for orchestra, for such it is, is a work of great strength and spirit; Finzi's music will assuredly live, and this is of his best. Alan Rawsthorne's overture "*Hallé*" is one of the two works specially written for the Festival—Vaughan Williams' *Flourish* is the other—and it may, from what was heard, become a harness-companion to the *Street Corner* overture. The Vaughan Williams' work, written for "Glorious John" to open the season with is a thrilling and amusing affair—in style and orchestral quip and quirk it sounded like a microcosm of the eighth Symphony—and is bound to be much played in the future when its personal Hallé associations have lost their cogency.

The musical weight of the season is best viewed, perhaps, in terms of visiting performers—first having said that the orchestra gave, for the most part, inspired performances on their own account and concerto accompaniments which matched the distinction of any soloist. Brahms' first and second piano concertos were played by Artur Schnabel and Clifford Curzon, who are, in my opinion, the two greatest virtuoso pianists now living. This is the kind of company Barbirolli and the orchestra should be allowed to keep more often. The resultant concerts created, even when "Centenary Festival" airs and graces are discounted, a new and different feeling in the air; everyone, players, conductor, and audiences reacted visibly to it, performances were magnificent and a very large number of people under the age of forty or so, understood for the first time what is meant by "piano concerto". Those over forty remembered the days before great soloists had priced themselves out of City Corporation-controlled markets—and the ghosts of Chopin, Cortot, Paderewski, Pachmann, Schnabel, *et al.* were abroad again in the Free Trade Hall. Other outstanding performances have been Gina Bachauer in Prokofiev no. 3, Moiseiwitsch in Rachmaninov no. 1, Rosalyn Tureck in a breath-taking D minor Bach, and Robert Riefing, whose K.467 in C gave full promise of outstanding attainments as a Mozart pianist.

Among violinists, we heard for the first time, Tossy Spivakowsky; he also is good company in days when first-class fiddlers are rare birds, mostly migrating to the West or visiting us too briefly from the East! Unhappily, he played only the Tchaikovsky work. (This, of course, always tests the player's virtuosity: it has now, I regret, begun to test

my patience.) Beethoven was left safely to Isaac Stern, in a concert I could not attend. André Gertler played Bax' unaccountably neglected violin Concerto; if this fine Belgian violinist will have patience with us in the manner of Richter-Elgar we may come to see this work of Bax for the fine thing it is. A violinist whose reputation should, and will, reach world class is Endre Wolf: in one evening he played Bach no. 2 in E and Mozart in G, K.216 to high standards of style and musicianship, getting something different, yet essentially *right*, out of each.

As I write, Konwitschny and the Gewandhaus Orchestra have not yet arrived in the city (someone should tell them about coals and Newcastle: they propose to bring Schubert no. 9 and *Till Eulenspiegel*, of which we here have our bellies overfull). From other visiting conductors there have been some memorable items—even whole concerts. Paul Hindemith (under whom Tureck played her unforgettable Bach) conducted the "*Weber*" *Metamorphoses* and *Nobilissima Visione*, undoubtedly two of his finest works for orchestra. (Most of us would have preferred *Mathis* to the orchestral version of Beethoven's *Gross Fuge*, with which Hindemith completed his programme.) The Hallé players really rose to this conductor: he will never again hear, much less conduct, instrumentalists who put so much beauty, fire and zest into his writing.

In the period between Harty and Barbirolli, conductors who filled the breach were Beecham, Sargent and Heward. Leslie Heward is dead: but Sir Thomas Beecham is not, and his complete absence from the Centenary of an orchestra which owes him much is hard to understand, and if, in fact, fault lies in any place, harder still to forgive. Sir Malcolm Sargent gave a splendid concert. Too many conductors make Dvořák sound like Brahms: Sargent's smooth, unsophisticated rendering of Dvořák's second Symphony was exactly right, and he drove home the lesson with a Brahms' *Tragic* overture which, if not as massively moving as, say, Walter's or Barbirolli's, was inspired with the aural essence of Brahms' composing technique. Sir Malcolm gave Manchester its first hearing of Holst's *Hymn of Jesus*. How it comes that, in an area which boasts of choral traditions, this fine work could go unheard for forty years is a mystery; if Sargent did nothing to solve it, let us hope he has ended it. For the record, the Hallé Choir did not give Sir Malcolm anything like their best and were woefully behind their colleagues in the orchestra—sometimes in more senses than one.

I can, at the moment of writing, give no first-hand account of Jascha Horenstein's success with the orchestra: from all reports it was unqualified, and Manchester is said to have heard a great performance of Shostakovich's fifth Symphony; this masterpiece was last heard under Albert Coates thirteen years ago: I, for one, hope the orchestra has now re-learned it and whoever conducts in years immediately ahead, pulls it out annually. The remaining visiting conductor was Benjamin Britten, who brought with him the *Peter Grimes* "*Sea Interludes*", *Les Illuminations*, "*Pas-de-Six*" (from *The Prince of Pagodas*) and *Peter Pears*.

The highest expression of English song in our life-time is Benjamin Britten playing his own accompaniments to Peter Pears singing. Unquestionably, there is greatness of both creation and performance in their recitals at the piano. The same cannot be said of the orchestral songs, and certainly not of *Les Illuminations*. But even in this, with its weary, falling scales which grind hurtfully at the nerves—with no tautness or tension—there is an astonishing range of original strokes; Pears was not in powerful voice on the night and the appeal of this work was lower than need be. *Peter Grimes* has now been with us a dozen years or more and is, properly and universally, accepted as a masterpiece of the theatre. On the evidence of the "*Sea Interludes*", it is a work of genius, theatre or no, and under the composer's stick the music was irresistible. Equally spell-binding were the six short pieces from *Prince of the Pagodas* in which Britten's wit salts his inspiration. Those who cannot bear the spectacle of conventional ballet should rejoice in the certain knowledge that the "*Pas-de-Six*" will stay in the concert hall repertoire; one would like to ask for another and bigger suite from the same work.

As tail-piece to this notice, more must be said about Sir John Barbirolli: he planned this wonderful season and he, with his players, has borne the brunt and given most of the

delight. Nowhere can be heard, and rarely will be heard in the future, finer performances than his of the following works: Elgar: Symphony no. 1; Holst: *The Planets*; Bruckner: Symphony no. 4; Ravel: *Daphnis and Chloe* (complete); Debussy: *La Mer*; Strauss: *Ein Heldenleben*; Sibelius: Symphony no. 7; Brahms: Symphony no. 4; Vaughan Williams: Symphony no. 8 and *Tallis Fantasia*; Berlioz: *Symphonie Fantastique*; Verdi: *Requiem*.

The catalogue tells us much of John Barbirolli's genius and of his character as an artist. He has created, in this country, a growing love for the music of French, Italian, Scandinavian, Austrian and English orchestral music to match our ingrained acceptance of all things great and German. The significance of this is only apparent to us who have lived with the process over fifteen years. We do not expect Parisians, or Viennese—or Londoners—to understand it. But in the history books of music, it will be found, years hence, as John Barbirolli's great contribution.

In those same history books, the Mayor and Corporation and citizens and music-lovers of Manchester will be asked certain questions. I wish I knew the answers.

Film Music and Beyond

MALCOLM ARNOLD OSCARRED

THIS Film Music feature's fight against Hollywood music, which had reached a long latent stage, must now be reopened on a surprise front. To be honest, the front is as much of a surprise to us attackers as it may be to the other side, but then there is a part-time fifth-columnist in our midst.

Let us survey the tragic situation. Over a wide field, British film music has in recent times continued to maintain a very considerably higher level of—intentional or automatic—artistic responsibility than that of any other country. As a paradoxical result, our films do immeasurably more in the cause of good new music than does the so-called Society for the Promotion of New Music, on whose Council and Executive Committee I shall disloyally sit until my voice is heard or I resign. [*Addendum*, proof stage: an Executive Committee meeting which took place since these lines were written produced more favourable reactions to my complaints. It remains to be seen whether artistic realism will ensue.]

The best of the mass producers, Benjamin Frankel and William Alwyn, continue to turn out respectable stuff at their worst and novel inspiration as (admittedly rare) occasion arises. Mátyás Seiber and Humphrey Searle, two comparative newcomers to feature-filmland, are contributing their own towards the musicalization of film music; indeed, Seiber's latest, *Chase a Crooked Shadow*, is outstanding, so far as anything can be outstanding under the watchful eye and deaf ear of a film director.

Finally, there is Malcolm Arnold, another relative newcomer, who has joined the mass producers. From the outset, his case was more problematic. As we have often noted before, he can be an irresponsible composer—a characteristic that is not altogether lamentable in an age which at times tends to be over-responsible about nothing, as in the case of the dodecaphoneys. But in filmland, Arnold's carefree attitude is assuredly more dangerous than amongst the highbrows where, up to a point, he tends to behave. He is a composer of considerable stature and has written some brilliant film music; on the other hand, it has become ever clearer that he is all too adjustable to film-directorial requirements, and some of the rubbish he writes is indistinguishable from what he himself would consider the worst possible music if he heard it anywhere outside the cinema; hardly ever have I heard another composer with an equally strong and well-defined personality being able to submerge it to the point of complete anonymity. The worst spots in his

latest (third) Symphony, op. 63 (Paterson's Publications, 1958), of which there are quite a few, especially in the central *lento* variations, can still be recognized or diagnosed as Arnold, whereas even the best spots in his latest film score, of which there are scarcely any, show a regression to that pre-individual stage of composition which, in Hollywood, is regarded as the basis of expertise.

Now it is this score, for David Lean's *Bridge on the River Kwai*, with which British film music in general and Arnold in particular have at last attained the kind of world fame that is spread by the newspapers. At the Annual Motion Picture Academy presentation in Hollywood on 27th March, the monster film—a ridiculous story, incidentally, so far as its hero's psychology is concerned—received no fewer than seven awards, the coveted "Oscars": it was voted the best film with the best actor and the best director and the best editor and the best writing and the best cinematography and the best music of the year. Reporting from Hollywood for the *Evening Standard* of the same date, Miss Anne Sharpley got so excited about it all that she conferred a D.Mus upon Malcolm Arnold, for who else indeed could have absolved himself so splendidly from so strenuous an intellectual exercise?

To tell the truth, his score is virtually illiterate. There is, of course, such a thing as illiterate music which "has something", but it isn't composed by people who can read and write music. Malcolm Arnold has betrayed us, which wouldn't matter all that much; he has betrayed himself, an act which, however commonplace, matters a great deal in art. *Mutatis mutandis*, the delightful irresponsibility that is at the root of his *Tam O'Shanter* Overture, op. 52 (Paterson, 1955) would have carried him, by way of meaningful dramatic counterpoint, through more than one film sequence with musical colours flying (by which I mean to say that he needn't even have been serious); instead, he chose to adopt the kind of irresponsibility which only needs an "orchestrator" in order to be supremely competent Hollywood. Until further notice, then, which must come from his own film music, Arnold shall be known as Tam O'Scarface, with the mark of Oscar there to remind us all that every artist is his *alter ego*'s keeper, and that nobody except the collective megalomaniacs in Printing House Square can find any excuse for a public withdrawal into anonymity.

As Professor Ben Morris recently reminded us,* "philosophers and writers from Solon to Montaigne, from Juvenal to Schopenhauer, . . . essayed to follow the advice of the Delphic oracle ('know thyself'), but all . . . succumbed to the effort. Inner resistance . . . barred the advance", until Freud, more alone than anyone before or after him, removed it. Yet Freud's loneliness was only personal *cum* scientific, for art had always heeded the Delphic oracle. And amongst all artists it has always been the musician who has proved most incorruptible in this respect: more than any other art, music is superfluous if it does not express that heaven or hell which, within a given cultural pattern, is essentially inexpressible by any other means, since everyone who tries to express it extra-musically "succumbs to the effort". Music, then, is the most artistic of the arts—a proposition readily acknowledged by musical visual artists, of whom, significantly, there are many; and anonymity in music, as everywhere else, means that the Delphic oracle has been inverted, that the commandment "Don't know thyself" has been scrupulously obeyed. When Arnold blares out a G minor fanfare consisting of an upbeat on G followed by D—E♭ as if it were a major revelation and does nothing about it, when he mickey-mouses instead of composing, repeats instead of varying, or automatically contracts instead of compressing, when his harmony needs the film in order to make apparent sense while his melody shamelessly says "I'm *Kitsch* and I know it", he goes beyond betraying us, beyond betraying himself even: he stabs *Eutróπη* in the back.

H. K.

* "Sigmund Freud: Promethean Man", in *The New Era*, London, March, 1958.

Book Reviews

Jean-Philippe Rameau: His Life and Work. By Cuthbert Girdlestone. Pp. xii + 627, ill. (Cassell.) 1957. 84s.

It has been Rameau's fate to be a battleground. He had his detractors in his day, and he has not wanted champions in the present century. To Debussy he was a symbol of all that was best in French music. Yet one wonders whether Debussy ever really understood him. There is in his enthusiasm something of the chauvinistic fervour that seems to inspire English historians when they write of the precursors of Handel in this country. Debussy felt that Rameau was an entirely French composer, and in that he was right. But national characteristics are not in themselves a sign of virtue, though they may appear so to a fellow-countryman. And when Debussy goes into detail, it is clear that his approach is highly subjective. It might almost be said that what he admires exists only in his own imagination—or more charitably, that he admires for the wrong reasons. He compares Rameau to Watteau, which is as far from the mark as Streatfeild's reference to "pompous artificiality"—a phrase which Professor Girdlestone rightly castigates.

Rameau was neither elegant nor pompous. His music is almost entirely lacking in the easy charm that we find in Destouches; at the same time there is nothing insincere in its gravity. What does strike the unprejudiced listener is that it is often awkward, in the same way that Beethoven can be awkward. Both composers lack that facility of technique that makes Mozart's music the despair of his imitators. Facility of technique is not everything: many second-rate composers had it in abundance. But the lack of it does create problems for a composer with ideas. Beethoven's sketch-books are the evidence of a blundering search for the truth that would be incredible if we did not know the man was a genius. And Beethoven had years of apprenticeship behind him, whereas Rameau's output was relatively small before the production of *Hippolyte et Aricie* at the age of 50.

The awkwardness of Rameau's music is not necessarily a stumbling-block, since ideas can transcend technique. What is difficult for foreigners is the very element that warmed Debussy's heart. He is wholly and entirely a French composer. It is natural for the modern reader to smile wearily at the controversies that raged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, at the eternal comparison of French and Italian music and the flood of pamphlets and articles devoted to it. Yet for musicians and music-lovers of the time the issue was a vital one, because the differences of style were so marked. Italian music, vigorous and independent in the peninsula, flooded most of Europe. The evidences of its influence on composers in Austria, Germany and England are too familiar to be detailed here. But in France it made no permanent impression, partly because the French are by temperament the most insular people in Europe, and partly because the French language created, in music, a form of rhythm and emphasis that was quite foreign to the Italian style. In England Purcell absorbed the Italian style and blended it successfully with a personal idiom and an instinctive understanding of English texts. But on the few occasions when Rameau tries to write in the Italian style, the result is wholly unconvincing. Even Campra, who was far better equipped in this respect, does little more than go through the motions.

French music, more than any other, makes nonsense of the view that art is international. That is why it so often presents problems—why Berlioz, for example, is one man's meat and another man's poison. The French are an unsentimental nation, and for that reason much of their music strikes people of a different race as insipid, particularly when any novelty it may have has worn off. No doubt the time will come when critics in general will talk of the "coldness" and "artificiality" of Ravel's music: some of them have been doing it for a good many years already. The spirit of French music reveals itself fully only to those who know the language and the people. It is one of the merits of Professor Girdlestone's book that he devotes some time to explaining the characteristics of French verse, the way in which it would naturally be declaimed, and the effect of such

a style of declamation on a musical setting. It does not follow, of course, that an understanding of French procedure will necessarily lead to admiration for the continuous *arioso* which plays such a large part in French opera of the baroque period. But if we dislike it and find it tedious, as many do, we shall at least understand why others find it so expressive.

This is the most substantial and comprehensive work on Rameau that has appeared in any language. It is written with scholarly care and a wealth of documentation, and at the same time in a style that is immediately accessible to the general reader. It is, if one may say so, a friendly book. Reading it is rather like having the author at one's elbow, at times curbing his evident enthusiasm in order to be gently persuasive, at others so stirred by his subject that the very warmth of his appreciation is infectious. He admits, in fact, that he has the amateur in mind. "One of the difficulties", he says, "of comparing Rameau and Gluck as musicians lies in the fact that Rameau comes alive on the keyboard much better than Gluck". It is a difficulty that should hardly worry the trained musician, provided he has any imagination. But for the moment the author has forgotten that trained musicians may be reading his book. He is acting as mentor to a group of music-lovers whose chief experience of music is at the piano. He understands their problems because in a sense they are also his.

The chapter on Rameau and Gluck is one of the most stimulating in the book, even though it excites disagreement. Professor Girdlestone does his best to be scrupulously fair to Gluck, and for a time one wonders whether his enthusiasm for Rameau has temporarily evaporated. But it is not long before the heart takes control of the head, and even logic is cast to the winds. We are told at first that "a Rameau opera . . . tends to be a collection of pieces of beautiful and often great music, more or less loosely linked together; *Alceste* . . . is a whole, conceived and carried out on a grand scale". Yet on the next page we learn that Gluck is "more sectional" than Rameau: there are "hard divisions" in his work. Professor Girdlestone's special pleading is evident in the fact that he devotes so much of his comparison to a discussion of *Alceste* and only incidentally mentions what he rightly calls the finest of Gluck's operas, *Iphigénie en Tauride*. But even if we restrict ourselves to the earlier works, is there anything in Rameau quite so pathetic as the recitative "*Euridice, Euridice*" in *Orfeo*? Professor Girdlestone would eagerly produce a dozen examples without the slightest hesitation, and we should be left with a fundamental disagreement. In the last resort our judgments of both composers are subjective. The old controversy is still alive. For many people it is Gluck's infusion of the Italian style into French opera that makes his work so lovable. Professor Girdlestone would not accept this. We are left with a common meeting-ground—the agreement that Gluck learned much from Rameau's example.

The subjective approach is bound to cause other disagreements. I cannot feel, for instance, that *Platée*, though humorous in intention, is in the least humorous in effect, and the fact that d'Alembert considered it to be Rameau's masterpiece leaves me cold. I cannot share Professor Girdlestone's particular enthusiasm for a passage in *Hippolyte et Aricie* (Ex. 53) which, beautiful though it is, could be paralleled by dozens of similarly pathetic moments in other eighteenth-century works. Nor am I much impressed by the alleged "modernity" of Rameau's descriptive symphonies. Music of this kind dates more than any other. However dramatic and even startling it may seem at the time it very soon acquires a faded air. So far from being modern it is unmistakably out-of-date.

These personal disagreements need not worry the reader, since Professor Girdlestone is evidently quite aware that his predilections will not necessarily be shared by others. And though his enthusiasm burns brightly, his approach is by no means uncritical. He is aware of weaknesses and dull patches and does not hesitate to point them out. No doubt he is rather too inclined to draw comparisons between Rameau and later composers. These comparisons, which result merely from associations in his own mind, are never particularly helpful: it is a little naive to speak of "four bars of vehement syncopation which step straight out of the *Mastersingers*" when they obviously do nothing of the kind. But here again the reader can easily make his own reservations and pass on to the next

sentence. More open to criticism is the occasional habit of claiming rather more for Rameau than is fully justified. There is no doubt that he was very enterprising in using the bassoon as a solo instrument, but he was by no means the only composer of his time to do this. Nor is it legitimate to say that the chorus "*Que ce rivage retentisse*" in *Hippolyte et Aricie* recalls "Handel at his biggest". Neither in grandeur of conception nor in vitality of rhythm and melody can this piece compare with Handel's finest choruses, effective though it is in a rather square-toed fashion.

When all is said and done, however, there is enough fine music in Rameau to justify a special study of this kind. Professor Girdlestone has treated the reader handsomely. Nearly 70 pages are devoted to *Hippolyte et Aricie* alone, and there are in all more than 300 music examples, some quite extensive, which should be an enormous help to those who have no access to the scores, even though there are rather more mistakes in them than there ought to be. It is unlikely that this book will be superseded for a long time to come. If a French edition is not already in preparation, some enterprising publisher on the other side of the Channel ought to start thinking about it straight away.

Mozart-Interpretation. Eva and Paul Badura-Skoda. Pp. 348, ill. (Eduard Wancura Verlag.)

This book is a unique combination of scholarship and practical experience. It should be required reading for all pianists and all conductors, though it also has much to offer to singers and other instrumentalists. A substantial part of it is devoted to the problems of interpreting the piano concertos, but this section is preceded by a general review (of more than 180 pages) of questions of *tempo*, phrasing, ornamentation and other allied matters. The section on *tempo* is a little too concise. We could do with rather more examples of movements which are habitually taken too fast or wilfully distorted after they have begun, and a fuller discussion of Mozart's use of *alla breve* time-signatures. The rest of the general discussion is remarkably complete and is all the more valuable for the absence of any attempt to be dogmatic. The authors frankly admit that there are many cases where it is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules and where taste and instinct may be the surest guide. But whatever evidence is available—from Mozart's letters, from contemporary treatises, and from a comparison of vocal and instrumental lines—is clearly presented and adds up to an impressive review of basic principles. The section on *Urtext* editions is particularly timely. It clears up a confusion which must reign in the minds of many amateur musicians. As the authors point out, several editions described as *Urtext* are in fact nothing of the kind, while equally editions which are faithful to the original do not always advertise the fact on the title-page.

The problem of balance is particularly difficult in the piano concertos. The authors accept the inevitable fact that in the economic conditions of the present day these works are bound to be played on modern instruments. Performances on instruments similar to Mozart's must remain a rarity until we come to accept the early piano as we have now accepted the harpsichord. In these circumstances a practical approach to modern performance suggests certain modifications, both of texture and dynamics. On this matter the authors' suggestions are very helpful. Equally illuminating is the discussion of the filling up of Mozart's often sketchy indications of the solo part, the function of the piano as a *continuo* instrument in the *tutti*, and the use of improvised ornamentation in slow movements. The curious passage in the first movement of the D minor Concerto where the pianist appears to be both soloist and *continuo*-player is explained by the fact that Mozart had a pedal-piano.

Techniques of Modern Orchestral Conducting. By Benjamin Grosbayne. Pp. xxiii + 279. (Harvard U.P.; Oxford U.P.) 80s.

Conducting cannot be learned from a book. But there are certain basic principles which can be studied privately; and it is just as well that they should be mastered before the student faces an orchestra for the first time. Some of them are obvious to anyone who

has played in an orchestra—an experience which is indispensable to anyone but a genius. All of them are fundamentally a matter of common sense: their purpose is absolute clarity. "Whenever you see a puzzled look on the faces of your men", says Mr. Grosbayne, "or whenever they become unsteady, assume it to be your fault. It often will be". These are wise words, and they are characteristic of the very practical tone of this book. Unlike Scherchen's *Handbook of Conducting*, it does not deal with the idiosyncrasies of individual instruments but concentrates almost entirely on the way to achieve an accurate performance. The actual instruction in time-beating is more detailed than Scherchen's, and in general this is a more suitable manual for the beginner, though Scherchen's is valuable for the advanced student.

Mr. Grosbayne's explanations, and the diagrams which accompany them, are for the most part admirably clear. It is only when the problem is complex, or appears so to him, that the written word is not quite adequate. The instructions for beating the opening of the *Magic Flute* overture are complicated by an obscure reference to "letting the baton drop and rebound", and the advice given for beginning Strauss' *Don Juan*—a notoriously difficult start—cannot be said to make the student's task much easier:

For this excerpt, thrust the baton upward and forward as a preparation and as a means of shocking the players into attention, keeping the baton near the center of the pattern. Time this forward-upward stroke to make it exactly the *tempo* at which you want the players to execute each of the following sixteenths. Observe a breath pause to allow the players to give these sixteenths. Then bring the baton still higher for the up beat on the second half of the measure. Proceed with the players on the down beat, in orthodox fashion.

Even supposing there is time for all this, there are simpler ways of beginning *Don Juan* which will occur to any experienced conductor. The section in which this quotation occurs, dealing with entries after the beat or inside the beat, is in fact the least satisfactory in the book. It could have been enlarged considerably with advantage. There are so many awkward beginnings in the literature of orchestral music (not to mention opera) that a wider selection of examples would have been very useful.

Another section which needs amplification is the one on vocal recitative. The example from *Il Trovatore* is too short and too simple to provide much guidance. Recitative is probably the severest test of a conductor's technique and it deserves a fuller and more detailed treatment than it gets here, admirable though Mr. Grosbayne's advice is, so far as general principles go. On one point, however, I find myself in disagreement. He says: "The matter of what language the singer uses should give the student conductor no concern. If he knows the vocal line he should be able to conduct the score regardless of what language or translation the singer may use". This seems to take no account of the numerous cases where there is rapid reiteration on a single note. In fact, it is essential for the conductor to know the words by heart; otherwise he will find that the vocal line undergoes all sorts of modifications according to the language used.

The 180 music examples add considerably to the value of the book, though it is a pity that they are not always quite accurate in detail. The opening of the *New World Symphony* (Ex. 10), for instance, is given with the time signature $2/4$ instead of $4/8$, and the metronome mark $\text{♩} = 100$ instead of $\text{♩} = 126$. There are also errors in the metronome marks of Ex. 37 (Weber, *Oberon* overture), Ex. 63 (Strauss, *Don Juan*) and Ex. 151 (Stravinsky, *Petrouchka*). Mr. Grosbayne does well to call attention to the mistakes often to be found in printed scores and parts, but his zeal misleads him in trying to persuade us that the second violins should play G \sharp and E in bar 27 of *Don Juan* instead of E and C \sharp . If he had looked at the third and fourth horns he would have paused before citing the evidence of "the E major chord in the other parts".

These strictures apart, I have nothing but praise for this book, which should be invaluable for students and might even persuade experienced conductors to do a little heart-searching. The advice on disregarding rests at the beginning of a composition or a section may be a little dangerous: in the excerpt quoted from *Don Quixote* the players other than the solo cello may very well wonder where exactly they are if the conductor begins at the third beat of the first bar. But these are matters which the student can

probably sort out for himself when he gets practical experience. So long as his players never ask "What are you beating here?" he may feel confident that his technical foundations are reasonably secure. After that comes a lifetime devoted to interpretation.

J. A. W.

Harmony for the Listener. By Robert L. Jacobs. Pp. x + 180. (Oxford University Press.) 1958. 18s.

This book is the result of its author's sincere desire to give his W.E.A. students a grasp of one of nature's deeper mysteries, namely the workings of harmony in music. Most of us who have lectured extra-murally will sympathise with his longing to get back to fundamentals, to say only the essential things, and to say them in a new, homely way. But we have to realize that the attempt has been made before. Books on "musical appreciation" (in this rather special sense of teaching non-technical students the gist of technique) are now pretty numerous. Some, like Percy Scholes', are remarkably good and accurate (but then he does not let himself get into impossibly deep waters—he knows that fundamentals are not always for beginners). Others are very, very bad. What of Mr. Jacobs' attempt?

We start shakily enough. "It is only in the context of melody that harmonies acquire musical meaning" (p. 5). "The harmonies accompanying a melody may be never so complex and ravishing, but until they *do* accompany one, until they perform the function of *harmonizing*, they are mere blobs of sound—mere blobs, pleasant to the ear, or not so pleasant, but in either event mere isolated sensations as devoid of artistic significance as blobs of colour are until the painter transfers them to his canvas" (p. 1).

I quote in full to avoid injustice, because I must confess that I personally find these statements not merely over-simplified, and not merely superficial, but acutely misleading. It would not quite be true, but it would be much nearer the truth to say that apart from literal non-harmony like plainsong and true folk-song, melody gets its significance and even its shape from the harmonic progressions which are its tonal field of force. We can see this in a very concrete way if we consider the eighteenth century habit of composing and writing down slow movements as a series of harmonic progressions, the bass being given and figured for the harmony, but the melody being left in the merest skeleton outline for the performer to fill in with his own choice of figuration more or less impromptu. So long as he produced an attractive and appropriate melody embodying the given outline, it did not matter what melody; the substance is in the progressions.

Yet from this quite false start, Mr. Jacobs goes on to make a very good and true point: that the significance of a note depends on its relationship to an established "central tonic note" (p. 4). He thinks (or at least speaks) of this as a melodic centre. In fact it is a general centre of tonality, and for post-mediaeval Western musicians that means harmony and melody in that order of importance. Even an unaccompanied melody for us implies the harmony which is its unheard source. Still, it is an excellent if over-hyphenated phrase that the logic of a melody (but truly of much more than the melody) is "a departure-in-order-to-enjoy-the-pleasure-of-the-return". I can imagine W.E.A. students, and readers of this book, getting a real flash of illumination out of that. I can imagine them enjoying music more as a result of it.

Then comes a quite astonishingly amateurish excursion into the fascinating topic of the inter-relation of acoustics and musical experience. This has already been treated by many good authors: very well and popularly (not impeccably) by Sir James Jeans; better still by L. S. Lloyd. And now here is Mr. Jacobs looking at the natural harmonic series, and noticing that the first six harmonics are both technically and effectually concordant. "Nature's Chord", as he reminds us; and its effect he calls "ideally rich and satisfying". But nature's chord goes on upwards! The seventh harmonic on C is *b'* flat; the eighth is *c''*; the ninth is *d''*. Then come *e''*, *f''*, *g''*, *a''*, *b''* flat, *b''* natural . . . need I go on? The technical discordance grows terrific; but the effect to the ear gets more and more rich and satisfying—hauntingly so. Not on the piano, where the impurities inseparable from

temperament spoil the effect; but an electrotonic generator can give these tones purely, and their smoothness is something you could scarcely credit till you have heard it for yourself. And this fact alone makes nonsense of Mr. Jacobs' novel theory of the difference between concord and discord.

Besides, why should we want a novel theory? The existing one depends on the known fact of "beats", which are the measurable interferences between sound vibrations of different rapidity. The faster the "beats" the harsher the discord, until they become so fast as to be inappreciable. Mr. Jacobs does not allude to "beats". There was no reason why he should—provided he did not try to account for discordance. Unfortunately he does try, and his account is not a true account.

From a wrong premiss, wrong conclusions. The major third is described (p. 14) as "sensuously pleasing and satisfying in itself" because its upper note is the "fourth overtone" (more usually, by the way, called the "fifth harmonic"—but that is mere nomenclature). True: e' is the "fourth overtone" of C . But the minor third "also produces a sensuously pleasing chord", and "the quality of sadness generally attributed to the chord of the minor third does not inhere in the interval as such . . .". Doesn't it? Whenever a minor third is sounded, the major third is also strongly present because of its powerful existence in the natural harmonic series; the two clash quite violently, and that is the cause of the "sadness" or disquiet. Prior to the seventeenth century, no important close was allowed to include the minor third, just because of this inherent difference, this lack of finality in the minor third.

I am afraid that kind of inaccurate re-thinking out of difficult matters which have already been accurately (I do not mean finally or infallibly) thought out by well-known specialists does go on running through this extremely well meant book. The original misconception of melody as the prime mover of tonality breeds further misconceptions. How odd, for example, to look on the sixth note (D) of *God Save the King* as a discord (*i.e.* a second) with the tonic C , instead of as a concord (*i.e.* a fifth) with the dominant G which is its harmonic bass. Or how one-sided to regard the fall of a semitone as "pathetic" (p. 15) on the strength of the Idiot's lament in *Boris Godunov*— F, E, F, E, F, E, F, E —without contrasting the perfectly ferocious and diabolic energy of the same interval in Hagen's music throughout *Götterdämmerung*.

But the book gets better, and better informed, as it goes along. It continues to be interspersed from time to time with naive re-thinking; no blurb ever spoke a truer word or paid a more dubious compliment than the dust-cover where it says that "this book is not just a re-hash of academic harmony". Yet I cannot help the feeling that the students in Mr. Jacobs' classes, however misinformed on the first causes which he tries to simplify for them, must have come away feeling keenly that there are great principles at work behind our experience of tonality. The further he gets away from first causes, and the more interested he grows in exploring the actual modulations of full-length works of music, the stronger this sense of his own excitement becomes. And it is often the excitement rather than the information which opens doors and windows for non-technical students.

R. D.

Talking of Music. By Neville Cardus. Pp. 320. (Collins.) 1957. 16s.

There are, in life, some minor, recurring pleasures one would not be without. Mr. Cardus' articles in *The Manchester Guardian* have provided periodic treats quite of this class. But this is no reason why they should make a good book. Indeed, the very quality I have tried to indicate is partly destroyed in any attempt to compress, to organize and to unload on the reader these sometimes very beautiful bits and pieces in one large chunk.

Fifty-odd essays, in length between six and seven hundred words, make up the book. Topics such as "Mozart the Unparalleled" and "The Tragic Sense in *Carmen*" are treated equally in four or five pages and this means, inevitably, that the writing and the conceptual approach to the many widely varied topics which make up the book must be uneven in the extreme. If we may use similes near to his own heart: Mr. Cardus is like a batsman

trying to score the same number of runs, in each over, off all kinds of bowling. And of course he fails: some of the essays are *trivia* and some are absolute gems. What was wanted was stern self-criticism in their selection.

Besides being more critically selected, the essays could have been, for our comfort, more searchingly edited. If, for example, we read, in Cardus' best prose, that Lisa della Casa is lovely to look at, we are most certainly with him. If, weeks later, this pulchritude is once more evoked, we may have forgotten the first occasion and, anyway, we still agree. To be told the happy fact more than once in the same small book is, however, more than irritating. Discussing the varied styles of conductors: in one essay Sir Malcolm Sargent is imagined as saying: "Brahms on the second floor, Mod'm, Beethoven on the seventh". Only a dozen pages later, another conductor is saying, "Brahms on the second floor, Sir, Mozart on the sixth". This repetition of the apt phrase happens again and again. So does the quite off-putting habit of telling us that a German expression or phrase cannot *really* be put into English—and then giving it to us in *both* languages. These, and other crudities resulting from the way the book has been put together, leave an unworthy impression; for every now and again in its pages one comes across the real Cardus, a minor master of the English language—but a master, and a deeply understanding lover of music who has helped greatly to make others love it.

There are some inconsistent critical attitudes. In a thoughtful piece on Hugo Wolf, the author says, "the piano is at least as important as the voice", referring of course to the songs; writing chattily about Sargent, the conductor, he praises Sir Malcolm's *orchestration* of a group of Brahms' songs. One wonders if Cardus really means what is implied in these two attitudes. Of Neville Cardus the critic, the best of the present writings are those dealing with criticism itself. The three essays, "Criticism and Humour", "Criticising the Critics" and "The Objective Ear" provide the most constructive corner of the book and should be compulsory reading for critics of all schools. J. B.

MUSICOLOGY WITH A VENGEANCE

Handel's Messiah: Origins, Composition, Sources. By Jens Peter Larsen. Pp. 336. (Black.) 1957. 40s.

As I have previously pointed out in these pages, there is no musicology, though one day there may be. Meanwhile, there is textual criticism and history and an uneasy conscience. The latter is about a variety of things, chief among them unfulfilled musician-ship and a frustrated scientific attitude which doesn't want to be "critical" and yet cannot attain complete objectivity because it's all about art, whence evaluation keeps creeping in somewhere. I am not being personal—merely explaining the psychological root of the concept of musicology, *musicologie*, *Musikwissenschaft*, still the laughing stock of all great musicians. (Some of the smaller ones like it, and the professional nonentities lap it up.) "Musicology unites in its domain all the sciences which deal with the production, appearance and application of the physical phenomenon called sound": thus Professor Paul H. Láng. I suggest to him that we quietly step outside before somebody discovers that we don't mean much.

The picture is gradually changing. When, some twenty years ago, Franz Schmidt turned into the personification of contempt as soon as he heard the word *Musikwissenschaft* mentioned, he no doubt had such leading members of the profession in mind as Guido Adler who, in the first volume of the *Vierteljahrsschrift für Musikwissenschaft* (1885), wrote his by now historic article, "*Umfang, Methode und Ziel der Musikwissenschaft*" [Musicology: Its Scope, Method and Aims], and who, for the rest, seems to have been pretty unmusical—if we may believe various musicians' accounts. At the other historical extreme, amongst the youngest generation of musicologists, we find H. C. Robbins Landon, a natural and indeed outstanding musician—who, consequently, appears to be in for it on more than one occasion, for if there is something which traditional musicology cannot easily bear it's music pure and complex.

Jens Peter Larsen is Professor of Musicology at the University of Copenhagen and a most distinguished member of the profession, but he is nevertheless not unmusical. We are not trying to be funny; with his record, the burden of musical proof lies on the defence. Just how musical Larsen is, is indeed a difficult question, depending on how much he hides his musicality behind his musicology. He may well know his *Messiah* inside out, but he exposes it outside in; in fact, his first chapter, "The Development of Handelian Oratorio" already gives some horrifying examples of history's intimate outside story:

Handel's original plan would appear in the main to have been merely a transference to the stage of the performance [of *Haman and Mordecai*, i.e. *Esther*] produced by Gates [on Handel's birthday in 1732], but the Bishop of London intervened and forbade the Chapel boys and choirmen to take part in any performance staged as an ordinary theatrical production. Since the singers were essential to the work, Handel had to accept the Bishop's ruling and cancel the dramatic production; the performance was therefore in pure concert form [p. 20].

... If oratorios had been staged as ordinary dramatic productions on an equal footing with operas and plays, oratorio would have become opera in all but name. The bishop's action did not lead oratorio back to its original surroundings, the domain of the church; it did not restore its character of art in the service of religion; instead it drew a sharp line between opera and oratorio, and prevented oratorio from being compromised. [My italics.] Oratorio's special position from the point of view of how it was to be performed was an important condition for the development of its own characteristics by other means—the choir—and for the retention of its particular ethos. This would undoubtedly have been lost had oratorio been allowed outwardly and unreservedly to merge into opera [p. 20].

And so we follow, with bated breath, musical history in the episcopal making, uneasily conscious of the fact that musicology's pet enemy, to wit, journalism, is its closest relative: subject a maximum of facts to a minimum of thought, and the result is the kind of surface causality whose immediate plausibility rests on the unexpected saving of mental energy. Easy explanations of difficult facts: what more do you want? Intra-musical interpretations of the development of composition are of course below contempt, since they are "unscientific", and they are "unscientific" not only because they are difficult, but also because you have to be an artist in the first place in order to be able to make scientific progress in this field. But our musicologists are sadly mistaken if they think that their kind of history is scientific, for *pace* Láng, a scientific view of musical history is impossible nowadays without a thorough grounding in sociology and psychology, such as Th. W. Adorno (with whom I disagree about most things) evinces, even though these sciences do not "deal with the production, appearance and application of the physical phenomenon called sound". The truth is that musicology still tends to fall between the artistic and the scientific stools. The ensuing bump, however, is heard by few, because real musicians aren't interested anyway and real scientists aren't called in to supervise; while on the other hand there is a complex distribution of vested interests, from the higher music critics who at last see a possibility of substantiating their authority act (which has become second nature to them by dint of their seeing themselves in print all the time), to the unmusical professional music-makers who at last see a possibility of acquiring and exhibiting something which the musical musician next door hasn't got—quite apart from the diverse cultural neurotics who think that plenty of *minutiae* and dates and numbers are good for you, no matter whether they mean anything. An elementary course in logic, not to speak of scientific method, would blow the "-ology" part of the business sky-high, and since the musical part of it has never been given much prominence in the first place, there are occasions when the only difference between musicology and journalism is that the latter is not so boring.

But, we said, the picture was gradually changing. Larsen has one foot firmly buried in the past; the other is groping in musicology's future, which is music's present. As a matter of fact, he devotes a whole big chapter, his second ("*Messiah* Surveyed", p. 90), to the music, which is a novel departure in a musicological work about a musical work; and if one reads his survey carefully, one does not remain in any doubt about his musical insight into the subject. At the same time, the evidence for the defence is altogether of a circumstantial nature, for as it stands the chapter is absolutely deplorable—basically tautological description at its most redundant, adorned with unfunctional music examples

whose cumulative effect is to make you shut the book and re-read the score instead. There are, of course, hundreds of surveys of this kind, and there would be no reason to raise hell about this one, but for the fact that this is supposed to be musicology. Even Frank Howes, the anonymous music critic of *The Times* who can hardly be said to underestimate the value of the soporific programme-note approach, has noticed something amiss. Discussing "Handel's *Messiah*: Authenticity and Variants", he remarks with reference to Larsen's book that

he has also a chapter on the general development of Handelian oratorio, but he does not discuss at length additional accompaniments or points of performance. Instead, he goes rather laboriously through the oratorio describing its contents number by number.

The opening sentence of the chapter sets what pace there is and discloses Larsen's approach in an empty nutshell. To be precise, it isn't a sentence in the sense of *sententia* or *sentire* at all; rather does it signify the death sentence on the "musicological" analysis of music. I must ask the reader to savour every word:

The impressiveness of the *Messiah* as a whole is due primarily to Handel's extraordinary sense for the unity of a work [p. 96].

If a pupil whom I have asked to analyze *Messiah* comes to a lesson and starts with this observation, I send him home and tell him not to come again until he has thought. Musical and logical (scientific) amateurism are here rolled into one. If he has a moment to spare—he won't need more—Professor Larsen is invited to give us a list of masterpieces whose impressiveness as a whole is not primarily due to their composers' extraordinary sense for the unity of a work. Never mind if he meant something special; this is submitted as ultra-musicology, not ultra-journalism, and the basic sentence ought to be a strict definition of the basic proposition. But let us crawl ahead:

Naturally enough, the new situation is also made manifest through the change of tonality. Both the recitative and the following aria with its chorus (No. 9), which rounds off the group, are in D major, in contrast to the G minor of the preceding chorus [p. 114].

What is here conveyed that is not obvious to every score-reading idiot?

The light and festive character of the [same] aria is determined partly by the flowing 6/8 melody, and partly by the delightful, airy, sixteenth-note figuration of the unison violins; opposed to this and partly in contrast, we find various phrases directly emphasizing the text [p. 115].

Musicological causality with a vengeance, and in case you have missed anything, here it is again, two paragraphs further along:

The aria obtains its cheerful character, as mentioned, largely from the characteristic sixteenth-note violin figurations [*ibid.*].

By now, you might say, you've got it. Got what? The fact that the light and festive character of the aria is determined by its light and festive character. The "as mentioned", incidentally, is one of many signs of Larsen's difficulties in progressing along a train of thought without having to regress at the same time: compare, *inter alia*, p. 117, p. 142—

As already mentioned, the first of the three choruses, No. 24, has the character of an arioso. . . .

—or, in the succeeding chapter, p. 205. So long as there is indeed a train of thought, one does not mind such relatively minor blemishes; bad style is, after all, a code of honour amongst scholars, and if the code is about something, let it be. But now:

In the modern view of baroque music—biased and dated though it may be—the *linear* and the *rhythmic*, quite as much as the harmonic, quality of the music are central features of baroque style [p. 119].

Considering the tiny observation which this sentence contains, its logical *cum* stylistic double blunder—one "music" too many and, more disturbing, one "baroque" too many—requires a disproportionate reading fee in terms of mental friction.

Clinging to the surface as if afraid that he might be unable to breathe if he dived below it, Larsen moreover treats causality as Mahler, with greater relevance, treats his motifs: A causes B and, virtually in the same breath, it's B that causes A.

But while the trumpet aria [No. 51] adheres to the limited contrast often met with in *da capo* arias, caused by a certain lessening of tension in passing from the main part to the middle section, rhythmically, melodically, or in other ways (as exemplified in the later curtailed *da capo* aria No. 18 ("Rejoice")), the middle section of this aria [No. 23: "He was despised and rejected"] has a decided increase in tension, caused by the transition from gliding quaver movement to insistent dotted sixteenth-note rhythm [p. 141].

Apart from the fact that if your tension lessens "rhythmically, melodically, dynamically or in other ways" you might as well save yourself (and us) the trouble of enumeration, the question arises, is the contrast caused by the factor of (dis)tension, as in the first half of the sentence, or does it cause the tension, as in the second half of the sentence? Of course, either proposition can be held to be true in a well-definable respect, but if you switch round in the middle of your thought without defining anything, the suspicion cannot be avoided that aside even from its fallacious formulation, the thought doesn't amount to much.

The fugue's [No. 25's] character of absolute music is obvious. Expressive factors are restricted to quite general basic features—the main motive's character, the key, the uniform, almost monotonous rhythmic texture—but they do not affect the development of the piece in any way [p. 143].

For one thing, Larsen has a footnote here explaining that the theme is a baroque tag, and pointing to its occurrence (outside seventeenth-century German keyboard music where Seiffert (*Geschichte der Klaviermusik*, pp. 205 ff.) has traced it) in Bach, Handel, "and even in Haydn and Mozart". Now, while the Bach (*Wohltemp. Klavier*, I, F minor) and Mozart (Requiem: Kyrie) references are specified although they surely must be assumed to be almost universally known, even amongst amateurs, there is no mention of the first of Haydn's two supreme but little-known F minor (!) Quartets (op. 20, no. 5), where the theme forms the basis of one of the greatest of all double fugues; perhaps this finale is the tag's greatest moment altogether. In any case, Larsen's omission is hardly musico-logical.

For another and more important thing, the above-quoted sentences are based on aesthetic premisses which are decades out of date, even though they have to some extent been perpetuated, for purely autobiographical reasons, in some of Stravinsky's writings. The antinomy between "absolute" and "expressive" music is not merely nonsense, but in fact highly misleading, the implication being that music which is extra-musically committed is "expressive" whereas pure music is not, or at any rate less so; whereas roughly speaking things are, *ceteris paribus*, the other way round: every single composer who was equally good at pure and applied composition tended to express himself more intensely in uncommitted music. (A possible exception is Bach, whom his religion kept musically "pure" in the applied field.)

As soon as I had read Larsen's aesthetic fallacy, I expected to find, sooner or later, what seems to be its inevitable corollary—the identification or, anyway, correlation of "absolute" and "abstract" music. Sure enough, on p. 157, the traditional unmusical proposition ensued:

If we try to free ourselves from the prejudices with which traditional assessments have burdened this aria [No. 36: "Thou art gone up on high"], we shall probably reach the quite simple conclusion suggested above: in this aria the central problem is not of a purely musical nature, but is involved in the textual obscurity, the lack of a unifying idea. Handel has managed (or evaded) these difficulties by composing the aria in a more abstract and more musically absolute way than most of the other arias in *Messiah*. We feel that he himself is less involved, and this may well be why the aria sounds less attractive to listeners.

We note that the two fallacies are here rolled into one, for Larsen does not forget to re-correlate lack of expressiveness and absoluteness ("We feel that he himself is less involved . . ."): applied music, expressiveness and concreteness are thus neatly thrown

under one hat. Inanity of inanities! Perhaps Professor Larsen will write us a treatise on why, *mutatis mutandis*, *Fidelio* is more expressive and concrete than the C sharp minor Quartet? Or, for that matter, film music more so than a symphony? But before he gets started, he might remember, or take note of, what ought to be a famous passage from a Mendelssohn letter: "What the music I love communicates to me is not thoughts which are too indefinite to be expressible in words, but thoughts which are too definite".

However, let not the author prejudice us against himself. As soon as we have this well-intentioned but indefensible chapter behind us and read ourselves into the third, entitled "Changing Versions", we realize that profound dilettantism and rare mastery can be combined within the same cover. Once again I find myself in agreement with Frank Howes, who says that "the real value of the book . . . is to be found in the careful examination of the changes made by Handel himself, which render the words 'original' and 'authentic' meaningless", and who draws attention to the fact that "'Who may abide' for instance and 'How beautiful are the feet' both exist in five variant forms". Larsen shows that owing to "Handel's repeated alterations to the work for the various performances . . . the question of the authentic form of *Messiah*" is indeed "complicated to a degree that non-specialists can scarcely imagine". "Strictly speaking", he says, "there is no . . . final version which as a whole and in detail presents the composer's ultimate view of the form in which he wished to hand down his work to posterity" (p. 186). Some of the Bruckner problems of a similar nature seem child's play compared with the intricacies unravelled in this exemplary exposition. "Hats off, gentlemen, a musicologist!" we should exclaim if we believed that there was such a person, but "Hats off, a textual critic" will do, without any implied denigration.

While Larsen concludes (p. 255) that "it will scarcely ever be possible to determine an absolutely standard form of *Messiah* as the one authentic version", he demonstrates how "in the case of nearly every number we can say which form is to be preferred for inclusion in a performance aiming at as close a reproduction as possible of Handel's own practice. In the great majority of cases we can settle on a particular version as *the* version, but in a few instances we must either regard each of two versions as valid or else leave the matter in doubt" (*ibid.*). He finally draws up a form of *Messiah* (p. 259) "which shall be as nearly authentic as possible", and wherein we still find "equally justified" alternative versions for four numbers (not six, as Frank Howes would suggest, apparently including two numbers which Larsen classifies as "subsidiary versions").

But even this superb chapter, which alone is worth the price of the book, especially if you don't read the rest, could have done with a spot of musical criticism (as distinct from music criticism). There is, for instance, the interesting story of the *Pastoral Symphony* (pp. 218 f.), one of those four numbers with two equally authentic versions. Briefly, the facts of the case are these:—

- (1) The piece originally consisted of the first eleven bars.
- (2) Early on, possibly before the first performance, Handel turned it into the ternary form used today.
- (3) Handel used this form in the early and middle stages of his own performances of the *Messiah*.
- (4) It is not certain whether a later reversion to the 11-bar version is Handel's own or whether "it conforms with post-Handelian custom"; but the former seems to be the more likely alternative.
- (5) "The generally used form including the middle section and *da capo*", Larsen concludes, "can naturally be defended since it was used by Handel himself for very many years, but the shorter form must presumably be accepted as the one he finally approved. This, incidentally, fits in with the whole idea of the work, as mentioned above" (p. 219).

It will be noted that *pace* his own tabular conclusions on p. 259, Larsen would follow the *dictum*, "all are equal, but some are more equal than others"; that he is inclined to consider

the original version more "equally justified" than the other. Whether he is at all influenced by the musicologist's psychology (with its predilection for delectable original versions and, generally, for those not generally accepted) is not for me to say. But in any case, in the circumstances, would it not have been worthwhile to take the respective musical merits of the two versions into account? Is musicality all that unmusical? Is it not a musical fact that the usual ternary version is, in itself, much better than its mere principal section, that the thematic middle part develops the structure to the extent of investing the strict *da capo* with the significance of a modified recapitulation—a feat of formal economy? "Ah", I can hear you all saying, "but a chapter on 'Changing Versions' is not the place for purely musical considerations". Well, then, what does the preceding musical chapter have to say by way of a musical argument? About the relative intrinsic value of the two alternative versions—nothing. Instead, Larsen develops an abstract aesthetic plea for the musically less substantial version which supports his later musicological conclusion, if it is not indeed prejudiced by it in the first place:

The feeling for the whole which determines the shaping of the entire Christmas section also applies to each of its three parts individually. Thus the rather short instrumental insertion No. 13 [*i.e.* the *Pastoral Symphony*], the only one in the work other than the overture, is only a link in the little chain of pictures comprising the Christmas scene, not an independent introductory movement like the corresponding and far more elaborately developed Pastorale in Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*. There is thus good reason to suppose that, having long made use of the extension he had given the Pastorale at an early stage, Handel finally reverted to the original shorter form [pp. 127 f.].

And now we get a reference to pp. 218 f., *i.e.* the textual story summarized above. Even on Larsen's own aesthetic assumptions, however, the longer version is just as suitable as the short one: let us not forget that the miniature form is not abandoned, that it is a matter of an eleven bars' principal section and a ten bars' middle part, all as simple and transitional as possible; that Handel did in fact immediately extend the original version, no doubt for purely musical reasons (there can't have been any other); and that while the extension "was used by Handel himself for very many years", the reversion to the mere principal section is not even certain to be his (see point (4) above). And after all this, Larsen tips the scales ever so slightly in favour—not of the better piece with all its authenticity, but of the unusual version!

The last, fourth chapter is on "The Sources"; and appended to the book are seventeen pages of facsimiles, a bibliography, and three indices, of "Handel's Works Mentioned in this Book", "Individual Numbers in the *Messiah*" and "Names" respectively.

The translation from the Danish, for which Major Bayliss of Copenhagen (basic translation), the Rev. T. H. Croxall (supplementary suggestions), Professor Dr. Paul Henry Láng (criticism) and, chiefly, Thurston Dart (revision of the whole) are responsible, is good though improvable; a few Germanisms have unnecessarily survived, while on the other hand there are one or two mistranslations from the German itself. "The process of translation and revisions has extended to about five years" (p. 13), in which time, with respect, something more immaculate could have been achieved. I am speaking practically, with sufficient experience behind me; I am aware, of course, that nothing is easier than to pick holes in a translation.

The production is acceptable, without serious misprints; but minor misprints, typographical inconsistencies and the like there are galore. I am prepared to bet the publisher a substantial sum that I should be able to point to *at least* one defect per page, on the average. A bit of musicology's obsessional pedantry might have gone into the production side.

H. K.

Die Barockoper in Hamburg. Hellmuth Christian Wolff. 2 vols. Pp. 416 + 210. (Mösel Verlag Wolfenbüttel.) 1957. D.M. 144.

Wolff's *Habilitationsschrift* was written in 1938–41 and accepted by the Music Faculty of Kiel University in 1942. The postponement of its publication by some fifteen years

has only increased the value of this work of scholarly distinction. The publication owes much to the generosity of the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* as to the cultural department of the city of Hamburg. In the intervening years Wolff's work has established itself as an authority of the very first order. For this first history of the earliest attempts to create a German national opera chiefly deals with music that perished in the holocaust of the last war. Only two years after Wolff's thesis was presented in Kiel the majority of the objects of its research was destroyed in aerial warfare. The preface contains a melancholy casualty list: the autographs of nearly all the operas of Mattheson, Johann Theile, J. W. Franck, N. A. Strungk and J. Ph. Förtsch and also the holographs of outstanding works such as Reinhard Keiser's *Carneval von Venedig* and Telemann's *Emma und Eginhard* are irretrievably lost. In addition, some valuable MSS collections of operatic arias and some unique copies of first editions of librettos became a total loss. Fortunately the second volume of Wolff's work is entirely devoted to a scholarly reproduction of extensive music examples. Nearly 200 quotations from the operas first performed between 1678 and 1738 at the Opernhaus am Gänsemarkt in Hamburg turn this publication into an indispensable source book for any future student of that epoch.

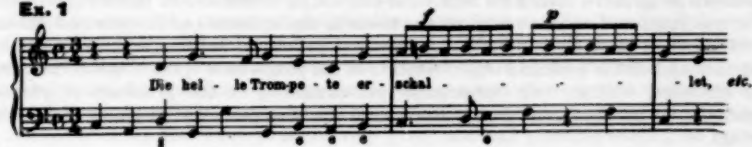
The original purpose of Wolff's thesis, however, was not to preserve for posterity invaluable fragments from vanished operatic scores, but to reassess the style of the Hamburg operas in the light of modern research. Wolff—a notable specialist in operatic developments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries¹—sets out to prove that German Barockoper can hold its own against the Venetian operas of Cavalli, Legrenzi and Pollaro as against Lully's *tragédie lyrique*. He valiantly attacks Chrysander's and Leichtentritt's belittling attitude to Keiser and arrives at surprisingly positive evaluations of both Keiser and Mattheson, specially as operatic competitors of the young Handel. Wolff convincingly debunks the story that Keiser composed his *Almira* out of spite against Handel's prentice work on the same text. In a truly fascinating chapter (p. 240 ff.) he compares the two *Almirs*, expounding the fundamentally different approach to problems of opera on the part of each composer. The juxtaposition of a number of quotations from the two *Almirs*² of 1705/06 focuses attention on the rugged individuality of Keiser and on his organic contacts with the world of the *Camerata* and Heinrich Schütz, and also on the more popular *italianità* of Handel's melodies as on the increasingly instrumentalised character of his vocal parts. In an all too brief chapter (p. 226 ff.) Wolff tackles the thorny question whether the early Hamburg opera was a true *Singspiel* (i.e. an *opéra comique* with spoken dialogue) or whether its dialogues were sung as recitatives. According to Wolff the autograph score (now destroyed) of Johann Wolfgang Franck's early opera, *Die drei Töchter Cecrops* (first performed in 1679 in Ansbach, and repeated a year later in an abridged version at the Goosemarket Theatre, Hamburg) contained *arioso*-like recitatives which were meant to be executed *misurato*, i.e. in the manner of a recitative in a church cantata. On the other hand Wolff believes that burlesque dialogues in the vernacular (*Plattdeutsch*), cropping up more and more frequently in the printed librettos of these operas, may have been spoken, especially in works composed before 1697 when Keiser started to compose operas with fully written-out *secco* recitatives. Wolff is at pains to evaluate the Hamburg opera as an early and successful attempt at a *Volksoper* in contrast to the courtly types of opera in Florence and Paris. Hence, he underscores certain links between the Hamburg opera and the "democratic" opera, launched in Venice in 1637, as also with the French "Théâtre de la foire" (after 1700) with its clever expedient of substituting "écritaux" (i.e. placards with text in block letters) on the stage for the forbidden dialogue, which, sung by the audience on popular tunes, ultimately leads to the origin of the "Ballad Opera". The absorption of elements of the German *Barocklied* and also of Italian characters and Spanish theatrical plots leads sometimes to surprising anticipations of future changes in musical style. In J. W. Franck's *Aeneas* of 1680 the hero intones a

¹ Cf. my article on Wolff's edition of Handel's *Agrippina* in MR, XII/1, 1951, p. 15 ff., in which also attention is drawn to the distinction of his scholarship.

² Vol. 2, nos. 98, I-XIII.

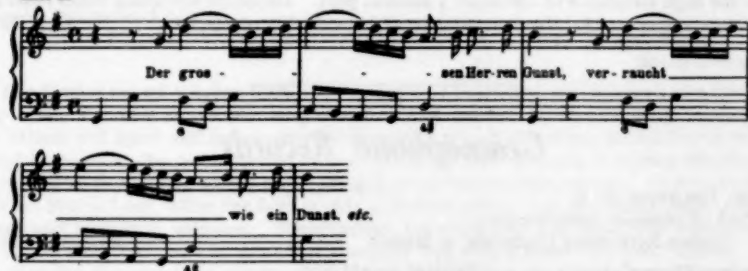
martial aria which features the sound of the trumpet in a manner foreshadowing the melody of "And the trumpet shall sound" in Handel's *Messiah*.³

Ex. 1



Many of Wolff's quotations come from volumes of selected airs from the earliest Hamburg operas, preserved in the notation of the Cithrinchen tablature. The instrument, a kind of Cister, is probably identical with Veit Bach's "Cythringen" and also with the gittern and cittern of the Mulliner Book.⁴ Its peculiar notation (which certainly warrants a closer investigation than given in J. Wolf's *Notationskunde*, II, p. 131 f.) can be studied in a whole page facsimile (p. 199) [together with its transcription (vol. 2, no. 80)] of an aria from the opera *Bajazeth und Tamerlan* by J. P. Förtsch. Among pioneers of the Hamburg opera, Nikolaus Adam Strungk takes pride of place in Wolff's investigation. The author proves convincingly that the type of strophic song with characteristic variants was a German speciality—contrasting with the habit of contemporary Italians who left such strophic variants to improvising singers who in turn confined themselves chiefly to adding certain embellishments while leaving the melodies unchanged—and that Strungk was its champion. Like Telemann long after him, Strungk understood well the use of illustrative *coloratura*, as in this quotation from his opera *Esther* (1680) which reminds one of *Meistersinger* in details of words and melody:

Ex. 2



More than 200 pages of Wolff's first volume are devoted to a discussion of the librettos of these operas and to a description of their characteristics and their motley Spanish-Italian and Dutch ancestry. The pedigree of Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona* is traced back to Telemann's *Pimpinone* whose *secco* recitative is pin-pointed as the real origin of *opera buffa* (p. 334 ff.). Telemann's German adaptations of Handel's Italian operas, specially prepared for the stage of the Goosemarket Theatre, are discussed for the first time. Wolff's juxtaposition of Telemann's "afterthoughts" with the corresponding parts of Handel's London originals (in the particular case of Handel's *Ottone*, 1723, presented in Hamburg through Telemann in 1726) is most revealing.⁵ Together with the earlier

³ Vol. 2, no. 40.

⁴ Cf. W. Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, article "Guitar family", p. 313. The article makes clear that the Cithrinchen shared certain features with guitar and lute.

⁵ Cf. vol. 2, nos 192-194.

Keiser-Handel parallel (in the case of the two *Almíras*) it demonstrates the inevitability of a more and more instrumentalized type of melody and of the increasing part played by the orchestra in the development of opera towards the middle of the eighteenth century. Telemann's progressive orchestral technique (especially noticeable in Wolff's quotations: vol. 2, no. 192b, and 193b) clearly points towards the orchestra of Haydn and Mozart. For full measure there are concluding chapters on ballet and ballet-opera, on decoration, production and on the technical improvements of the progressive opera stage in Hamburg. These chapters, written with remarkable understanding of the problems of pictorial presentation of baroque stage works in general, are illustrated by 38 plates and several drawings.

It would be surprising if a book of such erudition were flawless in every respect. The flaws in Wolff's book are, indeed, few and far between. They may be found in the author's occasional references to English music which he has not been able to study at the source. They are here corrected as a modest contribution towards a future second impression. Shirley's Masque *Cupid and Death* (with music by Matthew Locke and Christopher Gibbons) is wrongly attributed to Purcell (p. 24). In his otherwise excellent chapter on J. W. Franck, Wolff ignores completely that composer's long stay in London (1690-1696) which became a turning point in his life and career. In discussing Mattheson's operas (p. 286 f.) he overlooks Beekman C. Cannon's scholarly thesis, *Johann Mattheson—spectator in music* (Yale, 1947)* which had been completed by 1939 and contains, *inter alia*, a valuable 100-page "Critical Bibliography" of Mattheson's published works and MSS. Wolff's unfamiliarity with English sources may also account for occasional odd spellings of English names (Johannes von Wich and Cyrillo von Wich for Sir John Wich and Sir Cyrill Wich—the two English residents in Hamburg). Wolff, who today holds an appointment as Professor of the History of Music at Leipzig University, lives in the "Deutsche Demokratische Republik" where the purchase of books produced in Britain, the U.S.A. and other Western countries is practically impossible. Such facts emphasize the difficult situation of musical scholars "behind the iron curtain" in their praiseworthy effort to live up to the high standards of Germany's musical past. Hellmuth Christian Wolff deserves every encouragement for the continuation of his valuable research.

H. F. R.

Gramophone Records

Piston: Symphony no. 6.

Martín: Fantaisies Symphoniques.

Boston Symphony Orchestra, c. Münch.

RCA RB 16030.

Prokofiev: Piano Concerto no. 3; Classical Symphony.

Gary Graffman, piano, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, c. Münch.

RCA RB 16037.

I am afraid that Walter Piston's Symphony is just another "occasional" work—it is too weak to be called just empty. Most of it sounds rather pointless, and, moreover, almost as if the notes were not quite what the composer intended; it sounds unrealized, in fact. This would not matter so much if there were not so much that has gone unrecorded from the repertoire of English music—the symphonies of Bax, for example, or Holst's *Egdon Heath*, *Hammersmith*, and the Humbert Wolfe songs, or even outsiders like Lambert and van Dieren—the point is that they all wrote better music than this, some of them much better, but there just does not seem to be a sale for records of English music. The other "occasional" work on this record is so much better that it constitutes a problem; is it good enough to be worth the money on its own? Hear it yourself and decide; it is

* Cf. my review in MR, IX/1, 1948, p. 38.

a lovely score, to be despised only by those who believe that warm, conventional beauty has something dirty about it. The recording is good in the main; certain timbres are very well captured. But there is a hardness about it that matches the hard gloss of the orchestra's playing, and at moments of climax the tone goes grey. Under this treatment the Piston does not get a chance; its deficiencies are made to sound so brash and threadbare that one wonders if a different presentation would make the work sound more palatable. Given an exultant and sensuous reading the Martinů would sound indeed. This coupling is a great pity, for Martinů, although not a major master, is very well worth while and neglected by the recording companies. This is the only major work of his in the catalogue.

The cover of the above record is not very good; abstract painting verging on "action" painting needs to be hung without frame on a bare wall, not stuck on under conventional and clumsy typography. The sleeve of the Prokofiev is even worse, for the bad habit of out-of-focus photography (a silly effect) has spread to record sleeves, and this one makes one dizzy. I do not think the note is helpful either, and I would question some of its rather brash assertions. Among them is the expression "a shattering experience" as applied to the piano part of the Concerto. It is not on this record. It is well played, but swamped by the orchestra most of the time, and when it does emerge, it is difficult, by some trick of the recording one presumes, to distinguish the piano from the other instruments. The recording is over modulated, and the bang at the end of the first movement very difficult to track correctly. The "Classical" Symphony is given a clean, straight reading, and the smaller orchestra, one presumes, is responsible for the more pleasant sound of the recording.

Berlioz: King Lear and Corsaire overtures.*

Paris Conservatoire Orchestra, c. Albert Wolff.

Decca LW 5321.

Schubert: Moments Musicaux.

Schumann: Waldscenen.

Wilhelm Backhaus.

Decca LXT 5413.

Wagner: Wesendonck Lieder.

Kirsten Flagstad, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Hans Knappertsbusch.

Decca LW 5302.

The Berlioz record is taken from a 12-inch disc of overtures, and reissued as a medium play. The *Corsaire* is simply magnificent. The impact of the opening is staggering; attack and spirit and an exceptional recording give it a thrilling sound that is maintained throughout the performance; indeed, Wolff actually succeeds in raising the already fierce tension to a climax at the end. *King Lear* suffers by comparison. It may be that after all this is *Lear*, while the first is only a fustian pirate, but the whole seems underplayed and lacking in wildness. Nevertheless, the recording is as good, the orchestra at the top of their form, and in any other company this would seem very good indeed; it is just that the *Corsaire* is so outstanding. I would like to say a word about the sleeve. The artist is a Mr. Francis Philipps, and his picture is not really conceived in terms of that ephemeral thing (they are not nearly strong enough) a record sleeve. The background is too subtle and is spoilt by the titling. In spite of this, the face that looks out of this design is recognizably that of *King Lear*. This does not mean that it looks like what one imagines him to have looked like; it means that something of the conception of the play as a whole is manifest. I want to stress the meaning of that deceptively underwritten statement. I obtained expert opinion on the point, and without prompting my impression was confirmed. His cover for the Schubert-Schumann is entirely different; a wicked and masterly *pastiche* of early nineteenth century painting. In my opinion an outstanding artist.

I like Backhaus; there is a strain of consistent adverse criticism of him about, so I would like to make the point clear. For in my opinion his playing on this record is below

* Strongly recommended.

his best. A pity, because it is a most attractive coupling; I would even venture to recommend it to anyone who wants just these two works and does not want to pay for two records. The "Prophet Bird" shows the weakness; it is rather perfunctory and the delicate upward runs are not even. The Schubert is rather better, but sounds a little tired and lacking in poetry. The recording is also not quite the best; high notes have an aura round them. But the whole disc has charm, and, although better versions exist of both works, as a coupling it might well be considered.

There is very little to be said about the Flagstad record. Here is a performance that has become standard for our time, a singer who could not be surpassed nor replaced in music of this kind, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, and a superb recording. This is a completely adequate record, and like the Berlioz has been taken from a 12 inch record previously issued. Thoroughly to be recommended for those who like the songs. (Is it painfully obvious that I do not? My apologies.)

Bach, J. S.: *Suite no. 1 in C major*, BWV.1066; and *Suite no. 2 in B minor*, BWV.1067.

Thurston Dart (harpsichord), directing the Philomusica of London.

Oiseau-Lyre OL 50158.*

Mozart: *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, K.525; *Serenata Notturna*, K.239; *Two Epistle Sonatas*, K.244 and K.274.

The Philomusica of London, c. Thurston Dart.

Oiseau-Lyre OL 50162.

The Bach record is part of a projected series of J. S. Bach's complete orchestral works, newly edited. "Corelli" bows are used as well as all the other niceties; and ornaments, the French dotted rhythm, etc., are impeccable. These suites have been unlucky up to now; no version in the catalogue is completely successful, and indeed, most are rather poor. The present version is almost entirely successful. There is one tiny snag, in the very fast *tempo* at which the first movement of the B minor is taken; but even here, there is room for two opinions. The rest is entirely satisfactory, and indeed outstanding. The music is so beautiful when it is played properly; unless you have heard Bach played, as here, in the way he himself thought, you have not heard Bach. Possibly with no other composer is the gulf so wide between an authentic and a scratch performance; his gigantic size makes it inevitable that every little detail of colour and ornament should be of importance. This Bach series should be a landmark, and, when complete, a monumental touchstone to correct performance and a standard version of his works in this *genre*. One point only remains; how will this set of *Brandenburgs*, when it comes, measure up to the magnificent Archive set by D.G.?

Corelli bows are used in the Mozart also, and Dart, in a sleeve-note that, with the one for the Bach, is an unsurpassable model of what such things should be, makes a good case for them in work of this period. *Eine kleine* is given with the addition of the minuet, K.498a. Clean, straightforward performances; the Corelli bows make little difference, to my ear, except to soften the sound and timbre ever so slightly. The odd minuet still does not seem to fit in mood and rhythmic interlock, but its trio, strangely, does. A very beautiful little organ is used in the two odd "Epistle Sonatas" used as fill-up, but here is my one point of serious criticism. The balance here is so bad that this lovely little instrument is all but inaudible, very tantalizing, because when it is heard the sounds are so beautiful. Recordings very good; sleeve design of Bach, most moving; of Mozart, astonishingly inept.

P. J. P.

Beethoven: *Symphony no. 4 in B flat, op. 60.*

Gürzenich Symphony Orchestra, Cologne, c. Günter Wand.

The Record Society Ltd.*

The more I listen to this record the better it seems to be. Beethoven's fourth Symphony is an elusive piece which is given comparatively few concert performances, and very

* Strongly recommended.

few good ones, while on records I know only two other first-class versions (Concertgebouw, Mengelberg, Telefunken SK 2794-97; LPO, Weingartner, Columbia LX 274-77) both of which must now unfortunately be classified as interesting historical documents, being decidedly "low-fi" 78s.

There are some works which will, more or less, "play themselves" but this is not one of them. In order to make sense it needs to be interpreted by an artist who has absorbed and fully understands the spirit of Beethoven. A conductor who fails to come to terms with the subtle amalgam of moods which binds the seemingly disparate ideas of this Symphony into a perfect whole, inevitably makes a fool of Beethoven—to say nothing of himself—and may, as Toscanini did, take the bulk of his audience with him by the sheer strength of his wrongheadedness.

Günter Wand integrates the component parts with real musical insight; he has seen the work whole, communicated his conception to the orchestra, and we are presented with a revelation of Beethoven as refreshing as it is rare. The recording is good, the sleeve well-designed and substantial, and the accompanying reprint of Tovey's analysis puts the majority of so-called analytical notes completely to shame.

Richard Strauss: Arabella.

Lisa della Casa, George London, Otto Edelmann, Hilde Gueden, with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and State Opera Chorus, c. Georg Solti.

Decca LXT 5403-06.

Strauss' twenty-five-year-old masterpiece, originally regarded as a kind of poor man's *Rosenkavalier*, has only recently become accepted on its own very considerable merits—merits many of which this recording admirably emphasizes. Not only has *Arabella* a better operatic story than *Rosenkavalier*, it also possesses in the music for Mandryka some of Strauss' best writing for the male voice, fully on a par with Barak's music in *Frau ohne Schatten*. Add to these virtues the demonstrable fact of the composer's telling use of *leitmotif* and the overall impression of musical unity thereby and otherwise engendered throughout the score—and the sum total ought to prove a very great work. It does and it is.

The casual observer who has vegetated at one or more performances of *Arabella* will most probably have come to the conclusion that the final pages of the score are the best. They do, of course, yield the maximum of immediate enjoyment, but it seems incredible that no one should have drawn attention to the cataclysmic prelude to act three which synthesizes the musical drama and which Rudolf Kempe threw into the boldest possible relief during a memorable performance in Munich a few years ago.

Detailed comparison with the score shows this recording to be complete and to achieve an impressive standard of accuracy marred only slightly by occasional lapses of vocal intonation, some minor variants from the text of the printed libretto and a few instances where the intensity of the voice, mostly Lisa della Casa's, just exceeds what the recording can handle in comfort.

Lisa della Casa has made the title role famous for the present generation of opera-goers and it is difficult to think of any other soprano who could carry off the part so well. George London mostly sings just about well enough as Mandryka, but entirely misses the poetry of the part which he works through conscientiously without much evident imagination; I would have preferred either Hermann Uhde or Josef Metternich both of whom sing Mandryka at the Prinzregententheater. As the Graf Waldner Edelmann too fails to arouse much enthusiasm with a rather humourless performance which I feel Benno Kusche could have much improved. Finally Hilde Gueden sings well as Zdenka without creating any noticeable air of verisimilitude. This does not mean that the records are not recommended; the orchestral playing under Solti is mostly superb and never less than good, the recording is generally excellently balanced and provides a full realistic quality of sound with only an occasional harshness from top strings and heavy brass, and we are left with a very fair impression of a magnificent opera.

The eighth side carries Lisa della Casa's performance of Strauss' *Four Last Songs* (c. Karl Böhm) and the accompanying booklet of notes by William Mann, who has made a special study of the composer, could be taken as a model of what such things ought to be.

Wagner: Walküre, Todesverkündigung from act II, and act III (complete).

Flagstad, Schech, Svanholm and Edelman with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Solti.
Decca LXT 5389-90.

On first acquaintance this is quite staggering! The precision of the orchestral performance, the superb brass attack and the almost uniformly sustained textural balance, plus intelligent singing of more than average musicality combine to provide an experience which no Wagner enthusiast will want to miss. In addition the mechanics of the recording process are admirably unobtrusive and the illusion of reality is remarkably well maintained.

It is therefore the more infuriating to have to acquiesce in the senseless mutilation of the end of the *Todesverkündigung* where a tasteless orchestral botch in C major is substituted for the closing three or four minutes of the act: presumably because it was not thought necessary to find a singer for the nine bars or so of Hunding's part. While not so grievous as the 40-bar cut in the recent *Götterdämmerung* set, this is nonetheless a further example of gross disrespect for the composer's intentions and constitutes a serious blemish on what would otherwise have been a fine artistic achievement. Act III is, however, complete. The singing of both Flagstad and Svanholm is very rewarding and their obviously ageing voices detract only little and occasionally from the ideal overall effect; Schech is a steady if unexciting Sieglinde, while Edelman gives a workmanlike approximation to the part of Wotan—no more—for he is careless of Wagner's dynamics and shows few signs of having taken the trouble to get under the skin of the part.

To listen to these records without the score is an enthralling experience which subsequent close comparison with the printed page dilutes somewhat. Even Solti overrides Wagner's instructions at times, but the general effect would thrill in the opera house and the standard is substantially above what one normally hears.

G. N. S.

Purcell: The Fairy Queen.

E. Morison (S), J. Vyvyan (S), P. Pears (T), T. Anthony (B), T. Hemsley (B), J. Whitworth and P. Boggis (Counter-T), with The St. Anthony Singers and The Boyd Neel Orchestra, G. Jones (violin) and H. Jackson (trumpet), c. Anthony Lewis.
Oiseau-Lyre OL 50139-41.*

Verdi: Rigoletto.

R. Peters (S), L. Grandi (S), S. Chissari (S), S. Celli (M-S), A. Rota (C), J. Björling (T), T. Frascati (T), R. Merrill (Bar.), V. Tatzozzi (Bar.), A. La Porte (Bar.), A. Mineo (Bar.), G. Tozzi (B.), L. Monreale (B.), with Rome Opera House Orchestra and Chorus, c. Perlea.
RCA RB 16031-2.

For the first time, in thirty years of listening to recorded music, I am able to give full and unqualified praise to a complete opera issue. *The Fairy Queen* is outstanding and provides a new landmark in recording history.

A single blemish has nothing to do with the records themselves: the published notes are of so little use that it is essential to acquire a score in order to know which singers are singing which parts. I do earnestly beg the recording company to replace the issued notes, for which little good can be said, with a simple list of Purcell's numbers, divided into acts and sides and with the names of the characters and singers of each number filled in. Anthony Lewis, who wrote the notes himself, should stick to conducting: in his handling of the long score, from end to end, nowhere can a fault be found. In accepting *Dido and Aeneas* as a masterpiece of true opera, it has for long been fashionably, and erroneously, supposed that *Fairy Queen*, essentially a masque, was of smaller worth.

* Strongly recommended.

The depth and breadth of Purcell's genius went into this music as into no other; and here, the first time for almost all of us, it can be heard in its entirety, superbly performed and, incidentally, most beautifully reproduced.

The RCA *Rigoletto* is a failure. It is produced on four sides, and the economy thereby achieved is very much in its favour. But the cost of this saving is extreme. Between sides 1 and 2 the turnover is as bad as anything from the days of 78s recorded on the stage. Cuts I noted: twenty bars from *Ah! Veglia o donna*, twenty-one from the duet *Addio! Addio!*; a much shortened version of the chorus *Scorrendo uniti* and, between that chorus and *Rigoletto's La ra, la ra* many pages of the score are missing. Recording is variable; near the centre of side 3 quality has gone off so badly that the A flat chords which end act II go progressively off key as the act winds up.

Orchestra apart, the performance deserves no better than it gets. Tozzi (Sparafucile) and Rota (Maddalena) are good. The remaining principals fail consistently. Typical exploits: where, at *In cielo presso Dio* (act I) Verdi says *ppp*, Peters is singing too loudly. At *E il sol dell' anima* Björling gets through the Verdian *f* to *ppp* passage at a steady *forte*, slightly flat. In *La Donna e mobile*, *pp leggiero* is rendered *f pesante*. The bottom is reached in Gilda's act III trio with Sparafucile and Maddalena, where only rough approximations to the actual phrases of her music can be heard. Merrill as *Rigoletto* is not too bad when singing alone. In some concerted numbers he does not get through at all, and never dominates as he should. Incidentally, *Rigoletto* is not a four-act-opera as stated in the long and tiresome album handout.

Vivaldi: *Eighteen flute Concertos*.

G. Tassinari with I Musici Virtuosi di Milano.

Vox PL 353/1-3.*

Paganini: *Violin Concerto no. 1 in D, op. 60*.

Wieniawski: *Violin Concerto no. 2 in D minor, op. 22*.

Glazunov: *Violin Concerto in A minor, op. 82*.

B. Gimpel and Pro Musica Orchestra, Stuttgart, c. Eichwald. Vox PL 10,450.

I have commended Vox elsewhere, as have other reviewers, for the general excellence of their early concerto and baroque orchestral issues as a sustained imaginative effort over the LP recording era. This present issue of Vivaldi is amongst their best for qualities both of performance and recording.

One is not absolutely certain how much of Vivaldi's flute composition this collection represents. It is possible that the three sets of six which make it up are the entire complement. Vox' labelling is not easy to follow: "*The Seastorm*" in F and "*The Night*" in G minor are both numbered op. 10, no. 2, which cannot be. Although the violin was his first and last love, Vivaldi not only put some of his best work into the concertos for flute, but also some of the innovations which helped to develop the solo instrumental concerto. Thus in op. 10, no. 6 is to be found an air and variations movement—surely one of the very first in a concerto. It is probable that we still underrate Vivaldi in relation to Corelli on the one side of genius and Bach on the other. Pick where one will amongst these eighteen works, there is a freshness, a discipline and a degree of invention which puts them, as a body of composition, outside the confined area of antique music, and should put most of them more solidly into the flautist's concert repertoire.

Bronislaw Gimpel presents splendid versions in the Vox mixed bag. And how very mixed it is: of the three concertos only Glazunov does not wear thin after a few successive hearings. Incidentally one listens to this work with D. Oistrakh's magnificent performances in mind, and Gimpel is not found wanting. As an entertaining compendium of composing styles for the fiddle virtuoso, the record, beautifully engineered as it is, is worth possessing.

J. B.

* Strongly recommended.

Correspondence

Stables End,
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4th February, 1958.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

SIR,—Hans Keller has said nothing which refutes my simple statement that any satisfied listener does his own functional analysis as he listens. He has, however, raised another issue of some importance.

When any person does more than one job well he is, sooner or later, called a dilettante. Examples of the more useful dilettanti have been Leonardo da Vinci, George Bernard Shaw and Samuel Pepys.

I wish to say immediately, in the case of us more modest dilettanti, that the mind with more than one vocation is not necessarily better for any one job than that of the specialist. But he who *has* this kind of ambivalent mind has also certain advantages and, if he is a critic, one of them is most telling:—He does not regard the language, the theory and the intellectual discipline of *any* job as a mystique. For example, to the scientist, who loves music and is receptive to it, music theory and technology are matters of no great complexity. They provide an alternative means of expressing abstract thought, and appeal to him, in part, because of that. The science-arts dilettante knows that truth and beauty can be created from abstractions by more than one route and there need be no difficulty at all in analyzing a given route in the course of following it.

What seems to me to be doubtful about Mr. Keller's approach to analysis is that he is making of it a mystique. He regards the assembly and the interweaving of musical abstractions as something which is rather difficult for others to comprehend. When a genius, or any creative mind, has already assembled the symbols of music there is no problem for the reasonably good brain (which *wants* to understand the symbols) in comprehending what has been created. What is difficult to comprehend is the truth and the beauty which result from the operation of techniques. And if FA, or any other system, cannot explain why some music affects us nervously and emotionally in ways different from other music it is doing nothing more than explore, no matter how deeply and expertly, the technology of the art just as the mathematician, in demonstrating a discovered truth, explores mathematical manipulation. The scientist who is also an artist knows that what he *cannot* be taught is the thrill and the pleasure that comes from the discovery of truth; and no analysis of the functions of music—and I do not pick out Hans Keller's system from any other—can teach anyone the thrill and the pleasure of discovering beauty.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BOULTON.

Worcester College,
Oxford.
10th March, 1958.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

QUIS CUSTODIET . . . ?

SIR,—It is encouraging to learn, in the February issue of THE MUSIC REVIEW, that Mr. Hans Keller has "solved the basic questions" in Haydn's *Military* Symphony. I look forward with eagerness to knowing what these questions are.

Perhaps when he has finished with Haydn and Mozart he will turn his attention to the four simultaneous fugues of Raimondi, where his functional analysis will have scope for unlimited application without doing any offence to the music.

Yours faithfully,
R. J. DRAKEFORD.

50, Willow Road,
London, N.W.3.
7th April, 1958.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

KELLER'S ELGAR

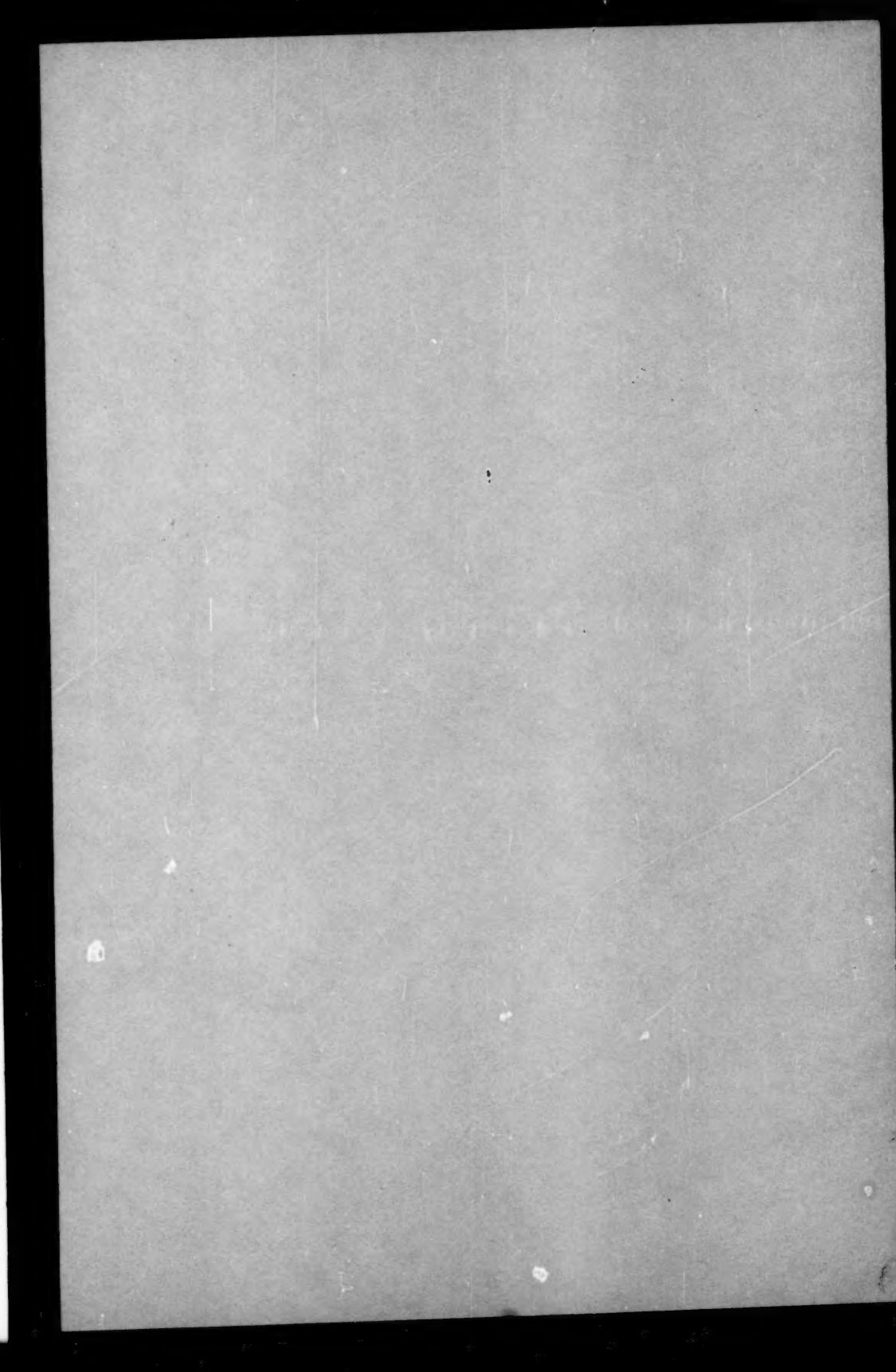
SIR,—My submission was that my respected friend Everett Helm misheard Elgar because he misunderstood him. True or untrue, the proposition is not logically invalid. Nor indeed am I without empirical support: "Too many notes, my dear Mozart, too many notes". . . .

Yours faithfully,
HANS KELLER.

ERRATUM

Volume XIX, p. 75, paragraph two, line 6 should read:—

The music is transposed a whole tone higher with the result that E minor and its determinants remain the opera's key-centre.



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